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The GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE

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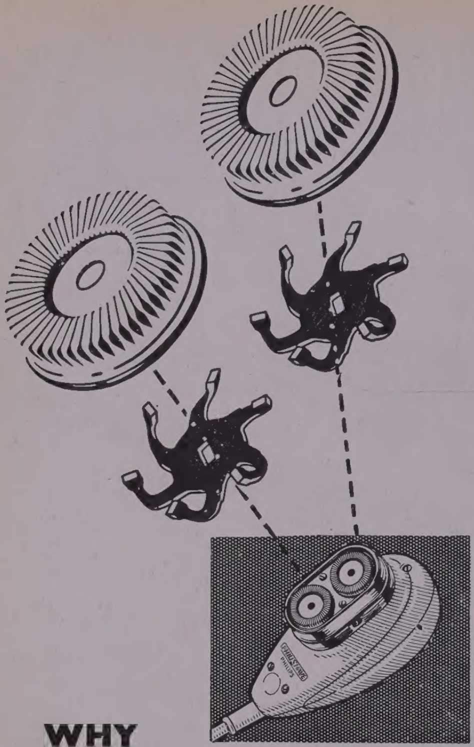

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The Tradition of Craftsmanship in Sweden

by EVA RALF

The Western Democratic, as distinct from the Communist, Welfare State has to persuade its workers where the latter, like the older capitalism, compels them. Need standards of craftsmanship therefore decline? The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will see during their visit to Sweden many examples of craftsmanship defining the Swedes' answer to this question, so important for Britain

SWEDEN is the third largest country in Europe yet its population is only a little more than 7,000,000. It stretches from the hilly plains of agricultural Skåne through endless miles of forest—and lakes—up to the Polar north, where the Lapps follow their reindeer under, as the tourist pamphlets put it, northern lights and midnight sun.

Its large industries developed late, with the result that grim, sooty industrial areas do not exist. It had the good fortune to possess huge deposits of iron ore and unlimited timber, and these have contributed to make it a country with a high standard of living: a definitely middle-class country of bourgeois virtues but no splendour, whose people are prepared to spend a lot of money on their homes. The shops, even in remote areas, are surprisingly often stocked with goods of excellent design.

From an international point of view many of Sweden's industries may be regarded as handicrafts produced on a large scale. This applies particularly to the manufacture of everyday objects which have been described as "Swedish modern". This expression does not primarily imply heavy machinery, or even ball-bearings, precision-tools or ships, which have long been skilfully made. Equally skilful is the making of furniture, textiles and tableware; but something more is added to their manufacture: an artistry and a knowledge which have developed with the years.

Swedish life is mainly an indoor one where warmth and cosiness may be enjoyed when it is cold and dark outside. To add charm to this wintry life there is a need for variety in household equipment, for things that stimulate the imagination.

In order to enjoy to the full the short summer most Swedish families from all strata of society move to a summer home of one kind or another, generally a bit primitive. There they find plenty to do in the way of carpentry, painting and so on. There may be a sailing-boat or the forests to stroll in. The intimate contact with Nature which this simple life provides may help to create in Swedes an understanding of good design and an appreciation of functional form and the right choice of material.

It is possible that these conditions partly explain the success of the "artist to industry" movement. When it was started, around 1915, by the Swedish Society of Industrial Design (Svenska Slöjdföreningen), and a few young artists—painters mainly—began to be employed in potteries and glassworks, it seemed to have a fairly uncertain future. Indeed only quite recently was the point reached where industry regards it as a sound investment to employ its own designers.

It is worth noticing that from the very beginning these industrial designers were not employed to produce ornamental pieces only, but also simple everyday goods for the family kitchen and dining-room. It is this side of their work that has particularly flourished and is still the one into which they put their greatest efforts. This could perhaps be called typically Swedish; in countries like Italy, for example, the work of individual designers is more likely to be seen in the pages of illustrated magazines than in shop-windows.

In Sweden this tendency extends from the craftsman in his one-man shop to the art director of a big industry. Johnny Mattsson, the wood-carver, son of a ski-maker, makes in his workshop boat-shaped bowls in various woods of modern, almost abstract, design. Behind them lurk the rough milk-trays used by farmers' wives, now refined by him to smooth and slender bowls. He has come a long way from utility carpentry but a true love of wood is the common denominator between past and present.

The glass industry, too, provides wide scope for the activities of craftsmen and designers, since the link between craft and

y courtesy of A/B Svenska Trähus

The Swedish feeling for good craftsmanship and the proper use of materials may well be fostered by the contact with Nature that is encouraged by the fact that the Swedes enjoy to the full their country life. (Above) *A small wooden country house.* (Below) *The tradition of boat-building is as old as the Vikings*

By courtesy of the Swedish Tourist Traffic Association

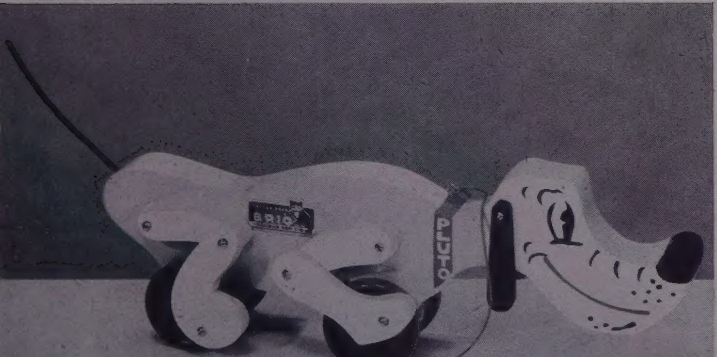
Karl Gullers, from Ca

Barbro Nilsson, one of Sweden's finest weavers, follows fait
fully in the steps of past-masters in her craft. Weaving
one of many Swedish industries in which modern designs an
techniques have emerged from skill learnt in the distant pa

Karl Gullers, from Camera Press

Swedish schoolchildren use everyday objects, mugs, cutlery, tables and chairs, that have been designed by men and women who may also be making collectors' pieces. Moreover the Swedish Institute of Industrial Design sees to it that they learn to appreciate the beauty that a true sense of craftsmanship and design can bring into their homely surroundings

By courtesy of the Swedish Tourist Traffic Association



By courtesy of Brio-Toys, Sweden

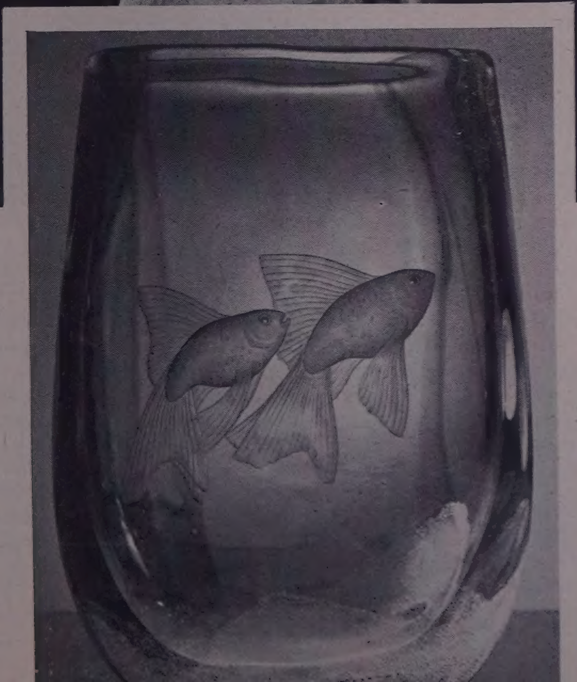
One of the natural resources that have made Sweden prosperous is timber. A minor but charming off-shoot of the abundance of timber is the ancient craft of wood-carving, often handed down from generation to generation. This used to take the form of toys and simple little wooden figures usually depicting country life and occupations. Nowadays the same care and thought go to making toys on an industrial scale, though Hollywood may have inspired the subject

Karl Gullers, from Camera Press

Iron ore is the second of the prolific natural resources upon which Sweden's flourishing economy is based. Iron has a long history among her exports and her fine steel products of today are unsurpassed. She is famous for ball-bearings —during World War II the Allies ran untold risks to obtain them—and the craftsmanship displayed by the men who make them is deeply rooted in the past

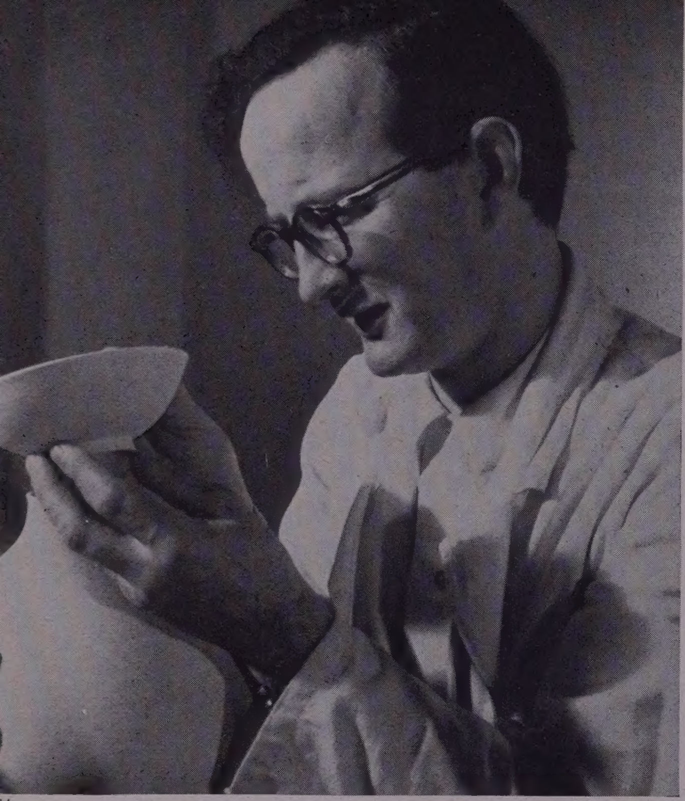
Karl Gullers, from Camera Press

Karl Gullers, from Camera Pr



Swedish glass is another craft with a lengthy history, mainly concentrated in the province of Småland where it still flourishes. The men and women who make the exquisite pieces such as the vase (left) *are also kept busy blowing table glass for mass sales. This is an outstanding example of the way in which Sweden is consciously endeavouring to raise the standards of design in industry*

By courtesy of the Swedish Tourist Traffic Association



hlson

Stig Lindberg, ceramist and art director of the Gustavsbergs Potteries, can design with equal felicity a drinking-fountain in vitreous china or a splendid dinner-service

mass-production is so close; a link also to be found in ceramics.

"I was employed at Gustavsberg as a ceramist and still work there daily producing my own ceramic ware. At the same time my position as art director is a very real one," says Stig Lindberg, who is well known for his noble stoneware and dinner-services, yet who also designs sanitary equipment. This quotation defines in a nutshell the ideal relationship between designer and industry.

In the Swedish Handicrafts Association weaving has received special attention and much thought has gone into the preservation and renewal of inherited treasures. Side by side you will find the traditionalist and the modernist.

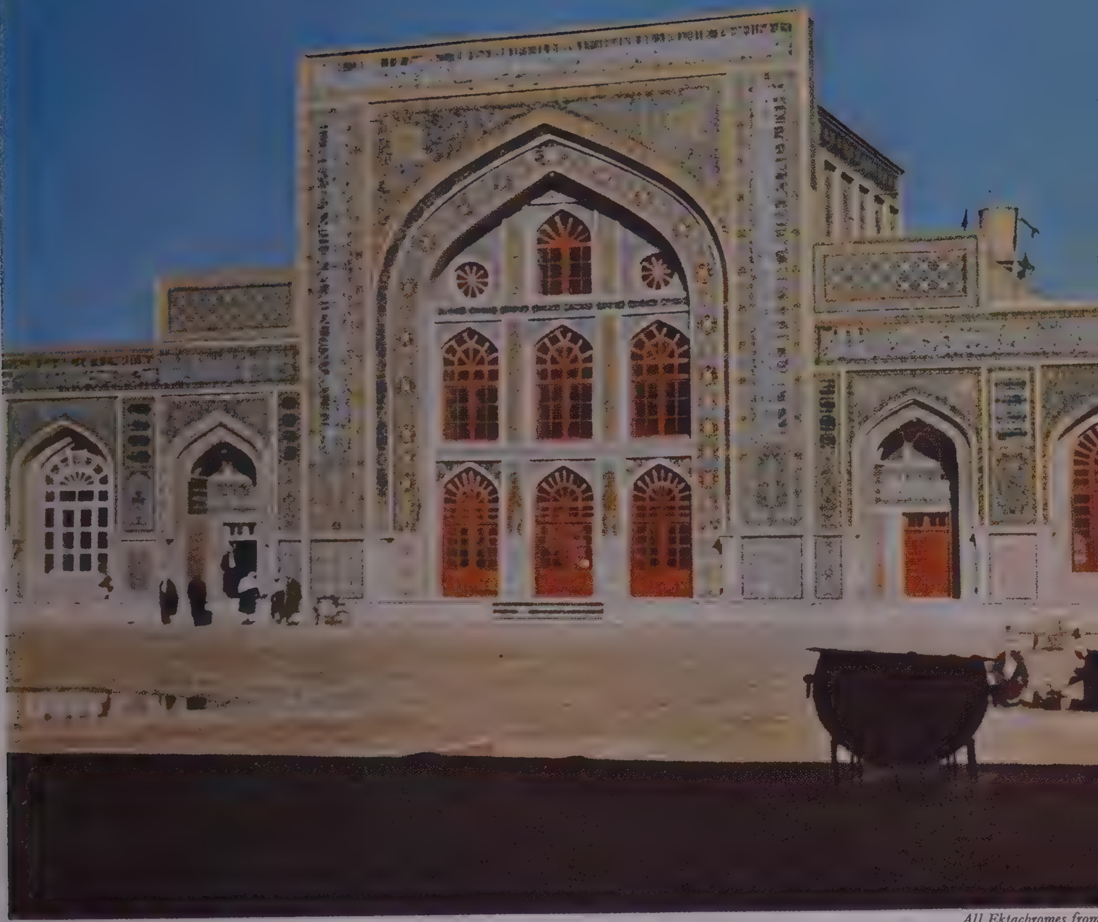
As firmly rooted in tradition is the art of the silversmith. It may seem that such a hard and stubborn material as stainless steel would offer little attraction to a man used to working in silver which is so easily shaped to every twist of his sensitive imagination. Yet silversmiths do attempt this difficult task. Sigurd Persson is one of them: he has been able to transfer his feeling for harmonious line to the making of such standard steel goods—bowls, saucers and tableware—as are to be found in the home and in canteens. Even for a festive table this type of stainless steel is proudly used in Sweden.

Parallel with the employment of artists in industry from the beginning of the century, the handicraft movement has worked to conserve the heritage of craftsmanship and tradition, but it has not been merely conservation: the elementary feeling for shape and material has been channelled into modern methods of production, concentrating on things fitted for modern life. If, in its special field of hand-made goods, the Handicraft Association has helped to create and maintain an understanding for craftsmanship, the Swedish Society of Industrial Design has taken upon itself the task of educating the general public to appreciate good industrial design. Schoolchildren plan imaginary homes; they are given small-scale furniture, actual plans of houses, samples of wallpaper, textiles and so on, and their teachers take them to shops and exhibitions. Through various educational organizations the Society of Industrial Design organizes courses giving a survey of the market as well as an opportunity to train the eye and judgement. People flock to courses and exhibitions of this kind, and take great pleasure in these activities. Even to a foreigner in Sweden this delight in good design is evident. Swedes flatten their noses against the big outdoor show-cases in the Kungsträdgården, a square in the very centre of Stockholm, where china and glass, furniture, textiles, lamps, leather goods and jewellery are exhibited by high-class manufacturers. A glance at the windows of banks—usually sedately boring—will reveal charming displays of some hand-picked examples of good design.

This whole complex of efforts to produce quality goods, the conscious endeavour to educate public taste and the appreciation of simplicity are essential to the Swedish way of life. The tradition of craftsmanship in Sweden is a vital and living one and ancient skills are an inseparable part of "Swedish modern".

Architectural Restoration in Afghanistan

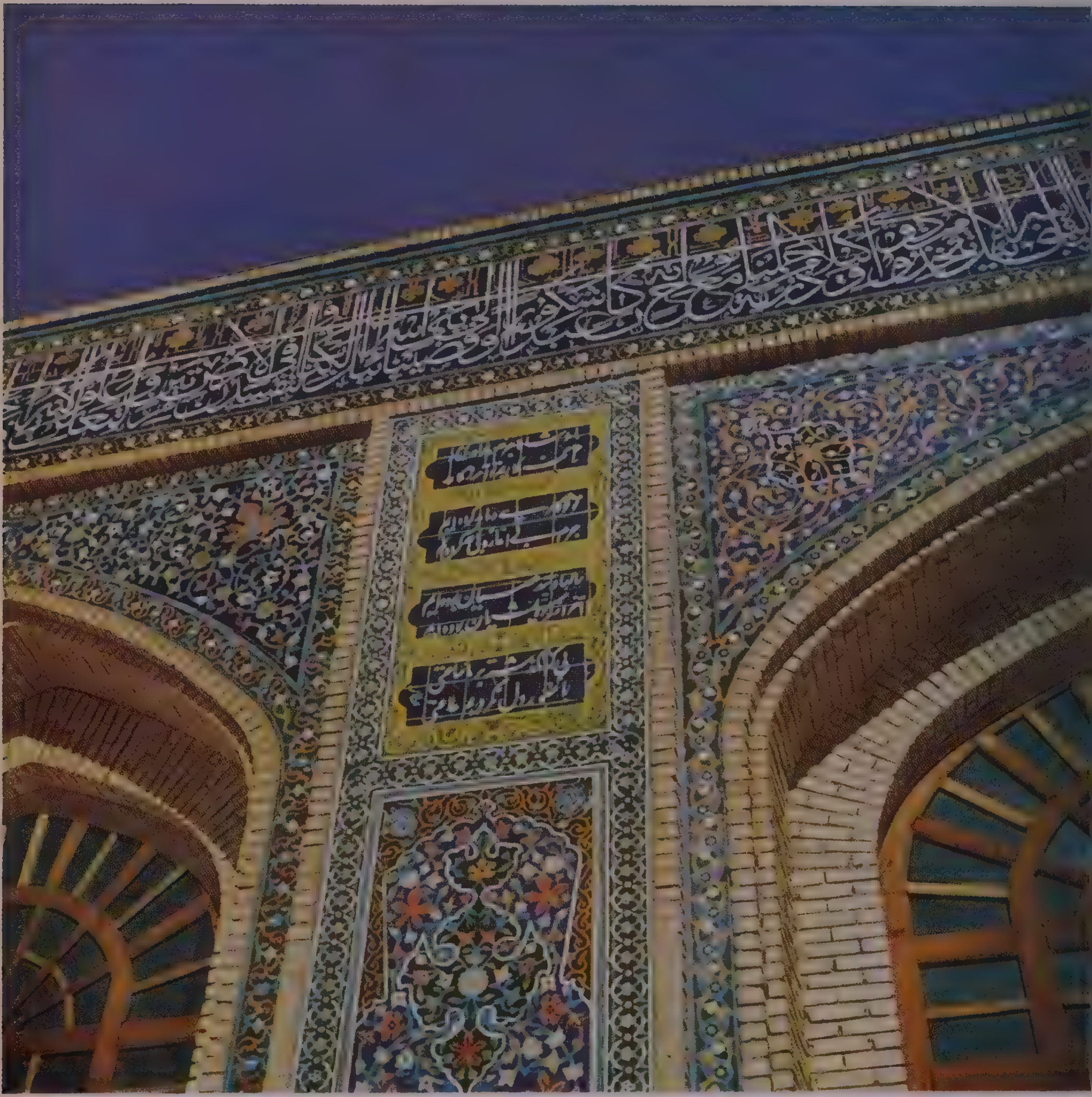
Notes and photographs by G. M. BUTCHER



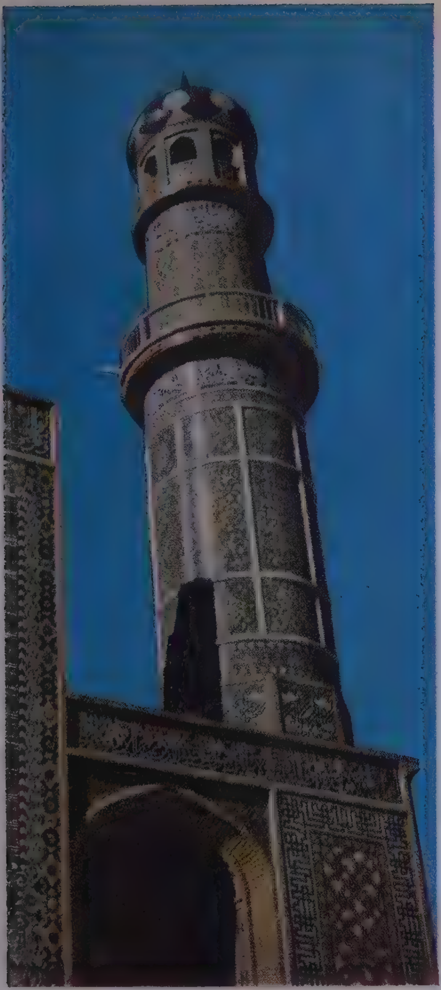
All Ektachromes from

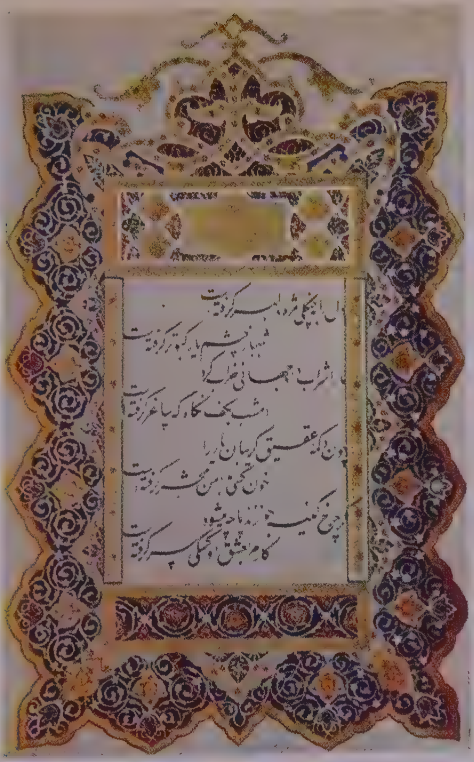
(Above) *The Masjid-i-Juma or Friday Mosque at Herat. It was founded in 1200 by Ghiyas-ad-Din*

Herat, in north-western Afghanistan, was either founded or rebuilt by Alexander the Great; it came under Arab domination in the 7th century A.D., and was sacked by Jenghis Khan in the 13th. It was the capital of various Mongol dynasties until it was included in the Persian dominions of Timur (Tamerlane) in 1393. During the next century, under the Timurids, Persian culture reached a very high point. When Babur, expelled from Timur's heritage, made Kabul the capital of his Moghul Empire in 1504, Herat remained Persian and was intermittently so until it was finally secured by the Afghans in 1861. The cultural influences of Persia were bound in the circumstances to be continuously felt and even today where works of art are concerned this remains the case, as may be seen in the restorations carried out on the Friday Mosque. Kandahar, in the south, had a similarly stormy history and, though part of the Moghul Empire until captured by Shah Abbas in 1625, it too was thereafter repeatedly in Persian hands. It was the first capital of modern Afghanistan but remains more Persian than other Afghan cities

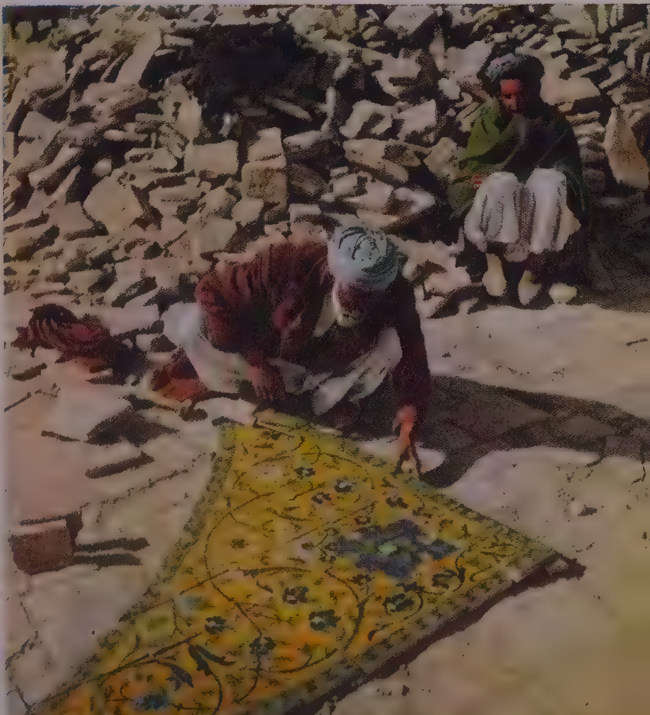


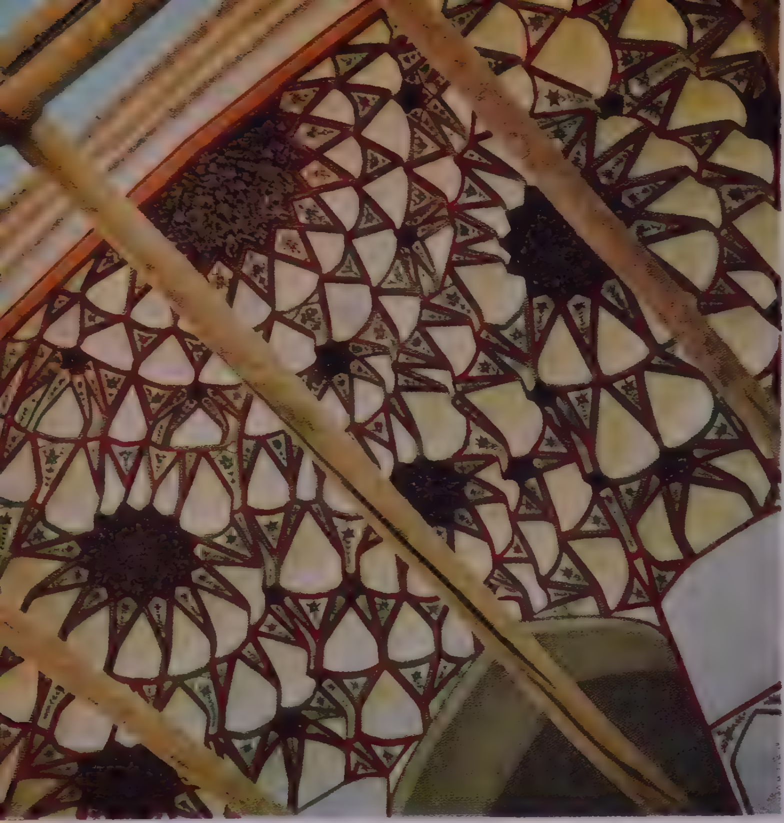
A detail of the new tilework on the Masjid-i-Juma, Herat. These "Friday Mosques" are the main mosques in every Moslem town, the equivalent of parish churches or cathedrals in Europe. That at Herat has fallen into ruins and been restored many times: by Ali Shir Nevai, for instance, at the end of the 15th century. This minister under the Timurid Sultans was a notable patron of the arts and supervised the reconstruction of the Herat mosque, though much of what he did has since disappeared. Twenty years ago Robert Byron described it as having no colour apart from the blue cupolas of the towers flanking the main hall: "only whitewash, bad brick, and broken bits of mosaic". Since then the old walls have been covered with tiles and the mosque has received a new lease of life. In Afghanistan the long tradition of tile-making has continued little changed for centuries and modern craftsmen use the same basic designs, similar to those used for carpets, of flowers, scrolls and lettering. The upright, angular early Arabic script with its conspicuous vertical and oblique strokes is commonly found on friezes, as here where it consists of quotations from the Koran and is contrasted with the later, more cursive and rounded Persian script contained in the lower panels: a poem of penitence by the 12th-century Persian poet 'Attar. This same form of Persian script is also used (opposite, top right) *in the decorative writing practised by the modern Kabul miniaturists*



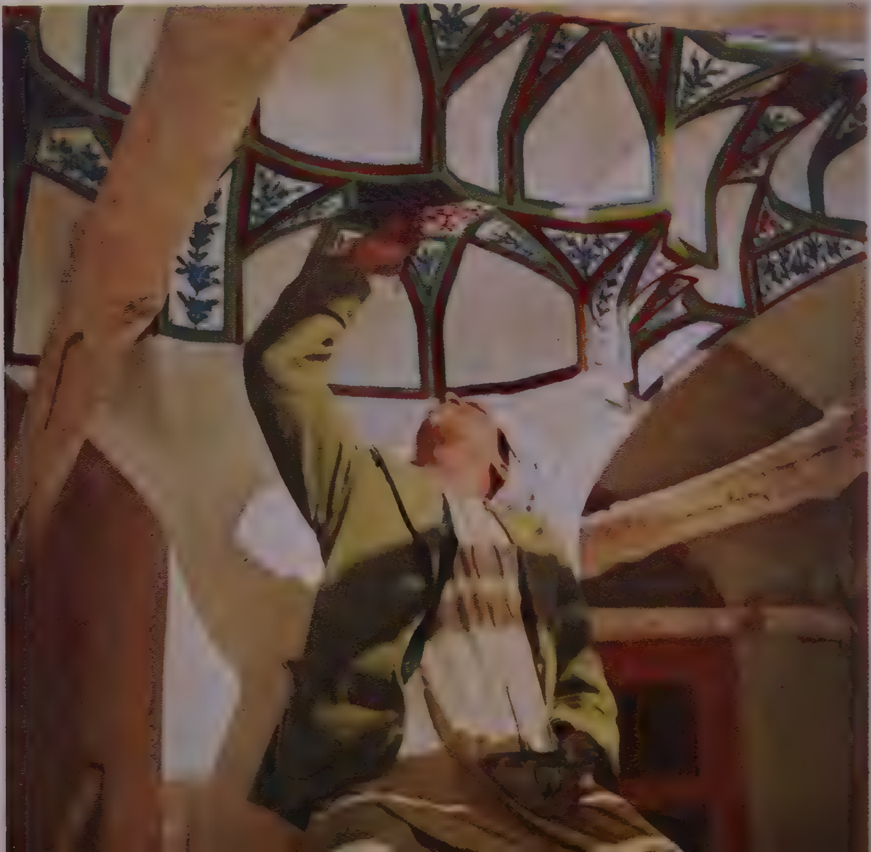


(Above) *One of the minarets of the Herat mosque, likewise newly tiled.* (Bottom right) *Assembling a tiled panel preparatory to placing it on a wall. Brick is the usual building material in Persia and west Afghanistan; tile-mosaic, tiles or stucco applied as decoration also serve as a protection from the weather. Of these tile-mosaic is the most costly. The designs are assembled in panels of the appropriate shape on a backing of plaster and lifted into place. Tiles on which designs are painted and glazed before assembly are less brilliant in effect but cheaper; and stucco is cheapest of all. How durable tiles may be is shown by those decorating the shrine of the eighth Imam Reza at Meshed, some of which date back as far as the 13th century*





(Left *and* below) *The painted stucco of the tomb at Kandahar of Ahmed Shah Durrani, the founder of modern Afghanistan, who died in 1773, is also being restored. Like the restoration being carried out on the Herat mosque, this is the work of craftsmen in whom tradition is strongly ingrained. They do not set out to reproduce exactly what their predecessors did before them, as would probably be the case in the restoration of a Western church; nevertheless the result is effectively similar. This stucco-work is characteristic of the Persian style of decoration for mausoleums, which are often circular or polygonal in plan and surmounted by a tower or dome. The tent-like ceilings of alcoves and domes are given a honeycomb effect with pendant "stalactites". As a rule they are left white in Persia but the Afghan artists prefer the richer effect obtained by painting*



August in Badakhshan

by OLIVER DE BAER

Last year a group of Cambridge undergraduates, under the author's leadership, worked in the north-eastern province of Afghanistan at an altitude of some 6000 feet, and studied local problems of land use and irrigation, as well as the nomads in the area. They also collected botanical and entomological specimens. The expedition received a grant from The Geographical Magazine *Trust Fund*

"I AM sorry," the Minister told me, "You will not be allowed to go into the Wakhan; nor will you be allowed to enter Nuristan, nor Munjan. I can however get permission for you to go to Badakhshan."

The decision had been long delayed, and now came as the climax to nearly a fortnight of negotiations in Kabul. Four of us had motored to Afghanistan from Cambridge, in the hope of being allowed to carry out a regional survey of the Wakhan valley which was so graphically described by Marco Polo some seven centuries ago. No definite reply had been received to our applications for permits, but by the time that we realized that none would be coming it was too late to give up our plan, even had we wished to do so.

And now we were being inexorably channelled into an area, not where we wanted to go, but where 'they' wanted us to go. The Afghan security system, good as it was, could hardly afford the risk of having four foreigners entering the narrow strip of Afghan territory which separates Russia and Pakistan, and we were being sent into the next-door province of Badakhshan, where we would doubtless be the personal charge of a Governor who would 'have his instructions' about us. All the way through the magnificent scenery of the Hindu Kush and even in the delightful coolness of the 10,000-foot-high Shibar Pass the thought rankled; through the succeeding plains of Kataghan and up to the town of Khanabad it was never far from our minds, and it was only on our arrival there that we realized that things might have been very much worse.

It was market-day in Khanabad, and from all the country around people had gathered for the monthly occasion. The scene was very Central Asian; stolid Uzbek farmers and bearded Pathans mingled with a predominantly Tajik population, and there was a liberal sprinkling of Turcomans, as well as a few Sikh and Mongol traders. The arrival of a car would have been event enough; that of so unusual a vehicle as ours, containing four Europeans clad in nothing but shorts, must have made the day as memorable for them as it was for us. We were swamped by a sea of humanity as countless faces vied with one another to peep in at the windows and as many voices discussed us in half-a-dozen languages.

After buying some of the enormous Kataghan melons—for about sixpence apiece—we forced our way through the crowd and onto the road to Badakhshan. The capital of the province, Faisabad, may also be known as Badakhshan, and the province as Faisabad; as there is only one road the confusion arising out of this is less than might be expected. This particular road is said to be the achievement of Afghan engineers without any foreign assistance; a journey along it is one not to be easily forgotten. It runs along the Khanabad river for some forty miles, over rickety bridges which groan as they are crossed, and often with a sheer cliff on one side and a drop of three hundred feet into a foaming torrent on the other. It then runs up the wadi of what must in springtime be another roaring torrent a quarter of a mile wide and crosses the watershed between the Khanabad and Kokcha rivers. Here we came across isolated patches of Uzbek settlement, and women in red dresses came rushing at us over the fields, giggling and beating tambourines as they came, and only remembering to veil themselves at the last moment—a marked contrast to the other Afghan women that we had seen.

After two days in Faisabad, the Governor informed us that we might visit the Baharak plain, a more or less self-contained area to the east of Faisabad formed by the confluence of four rivers. We were given the services of an 'interpreter' called 'Ata Mohammed, whose real job was to recruit a security guard from the villagers. The five of us set up camp in the Baharak Commissioner's orchard, near the poplar-lined banks of the icy-blue, foam-capped Zardeh river whose roaring could be heard several miles away as its waters rushed on their way from the Western Pamir to the Oxus.

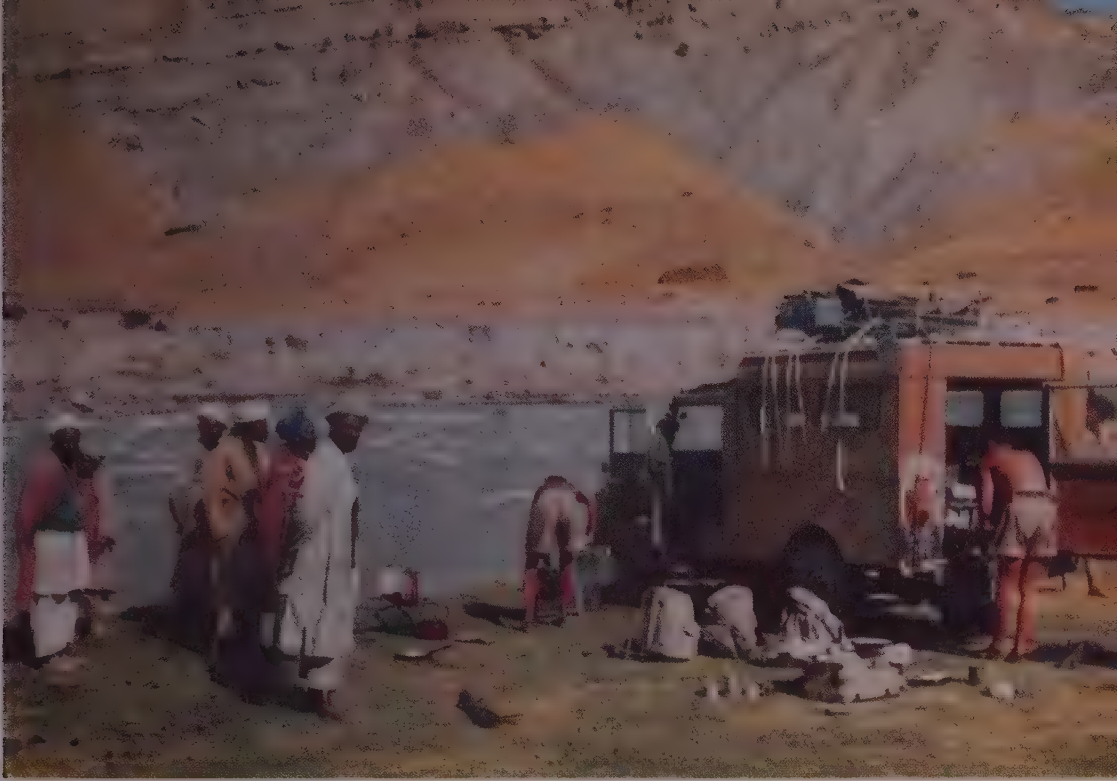
It was not long before the opportunity arose

photographs by the author

Kodachrome

(Above) *A tributary of the Khanabad River in north-east Afghanistan where the Hindu Kush mountains end and the Kataghan plain begins.* (Below) *A crowd of several different races at Khanabad, the former capital of Kataghan province, standing around the expedition's car—the first they had seen for weeks*

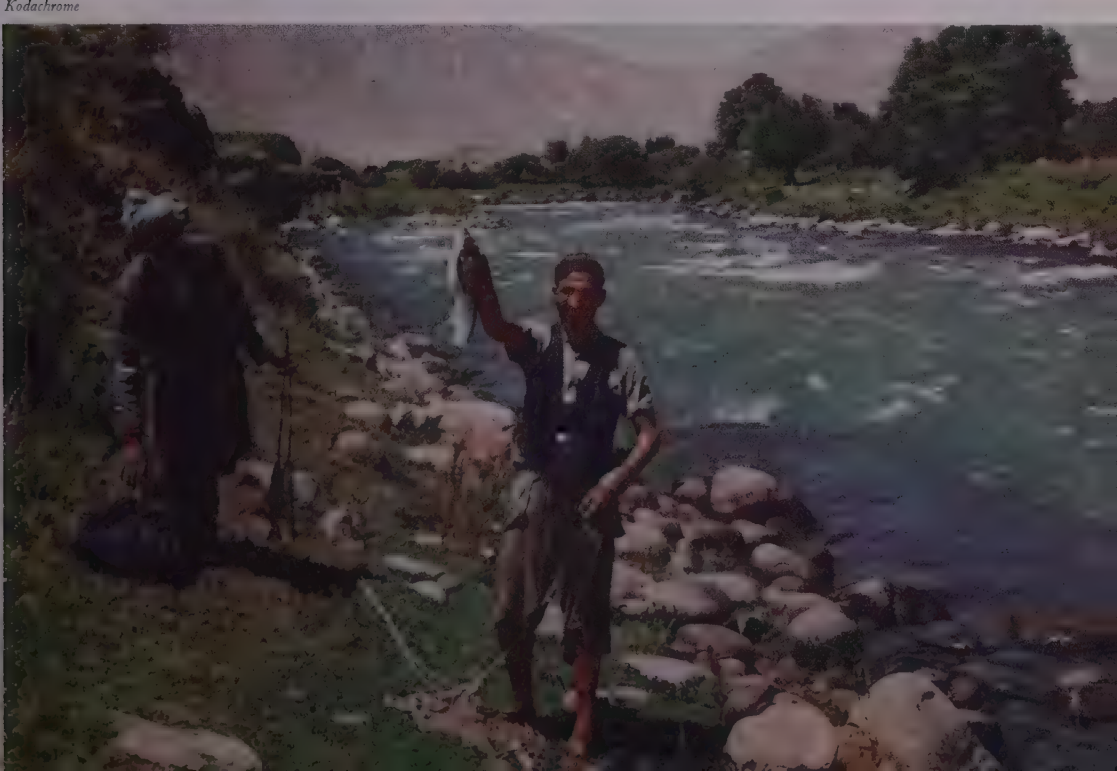
Kodachrome

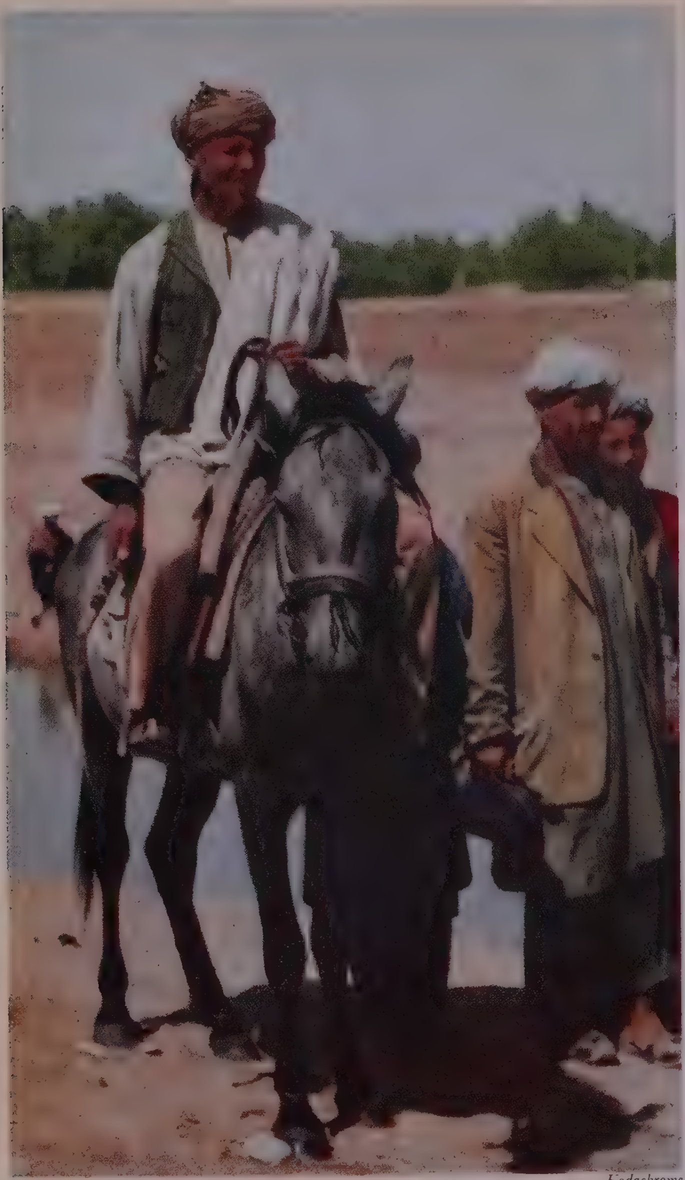


Kodachrome

(Above) *Whenever the car stopped it was surrounded by local inhabitants who usually restricted themselves to staring; in this case they are Uzbeks, Turkish-speaking people, wearing their typical lon gowns.* (Below) *Majid the fisherman holding up one of his catches. His conical net is at his fee*

Kodachrome





Kodachrome

Tajik farmers. The horse is of the esteemed Badakhshani breed; such animals were famous many centuries ago for their agility on mountainous paths and great endurance

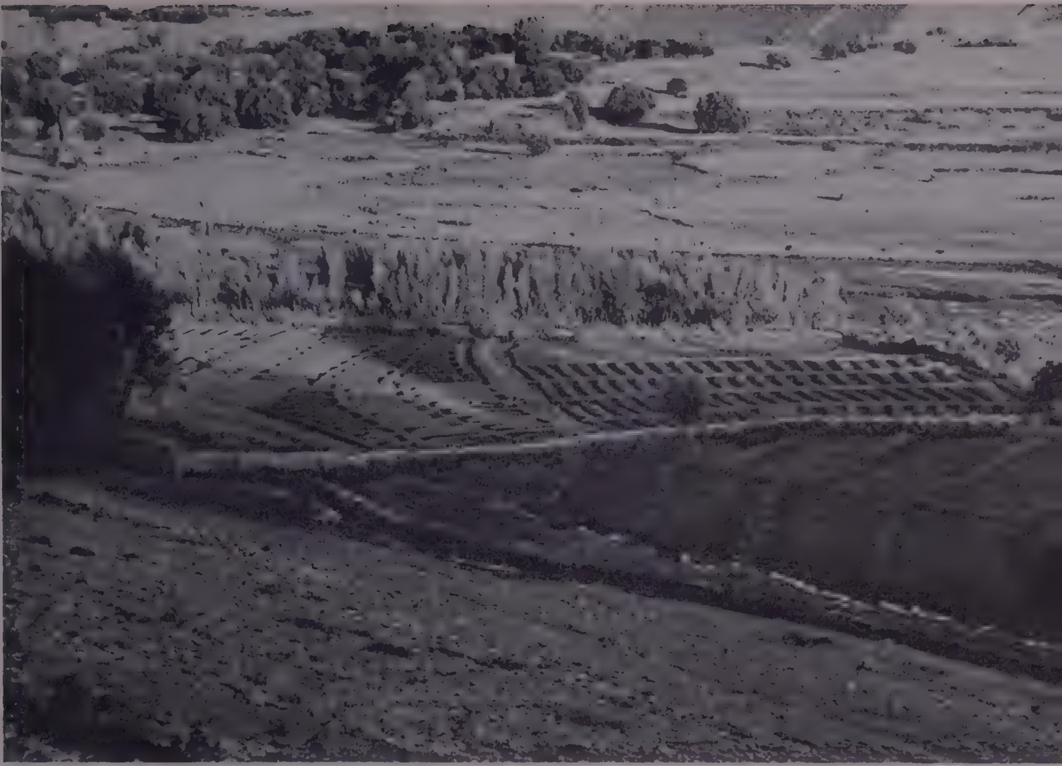
of interviewing one of the local inhabitants who had come to look at us. He was surprisingly well-informed, although he had never been beyond Faisabad—for his *pishk* or national service—and had never seen a foreigner before. He knew about them, however, and was anxious to relieve their ignorance.

"I am a farmer," he told me with unexpected volubility, "as are most of the people here, except the *mullah* and the police. You can see that the ground is good, and we can get two harvests of some of our crops. I used to get plenty of money for what I grew, but now I have two sons to keep, and it does not go very far. There seem to be far more people about than there were . . ."

At this point 'Ata Mohammed explained that as a result of the efforts of the World Health Organization fewer people were dying, and that because of this some people were beginning to go to the towns.

"When my father died," the peasant continued, "his land was divided up between his four sons, so that when I die my own sons will have an eighth of what my father had, and each generation will have less and less. But it is really quite all right—we still grow more than enough."

This, indeed, was true. In spite of an invigorating climate, in spite of plentiful water brought from the rivers by an intricate system of canals to the fields, in spite of mild winters and of fertile soil, the people of Baharak, having enough for their own needs, could see no point in developing their great natural resources or in encouraging exports. They had been perfectly content in their plain, with their inefficient way of working and their lack of modern amenities of which they knew nothing, until the doctors came to upset the natural equilibrium of population which had previously been maintained by disease. Now, the old, unable to break the habit of laziness acquired over the centuries, were unable to meet the approaching threat of an increase in the population, and were merely complaining sullenly that "things are not what they were"; such few of the young as had appreciated that their land would not be adequate for their need and had emigrated, taking the enormous step of leaving the valley for the towns, had little realized that the industrial jobs they expected did not exist, and that they would probably end up in the ever-growing



Most of the inhabitants of Badakhshan are farmers, but though the valleys are well watered and fertile and the climate good their farming is by no means efficient. (Above) *Here a canal (left centre) first irrigates the nearer field, a rice-paddy. The water then flows on to the melon-field beyond, by which time it is absorbed into the ground. Thus none of the topsoil is carried back into the river. This system ensures that virtually no work beyond normal maintenance of canals is required for irrigation. The main source of inefficiency is not here—for the method is obviously effective—but in the fact that the plots are too small.* (Right) *Badakhshanis working on a rice paddy. Nearly all the implements are made of wood. In the background is a completely barren and eroded mountain-side. As there is no rainfall for the greater part of the year nothing will grow unless it is watered artificially from the river*

slums of Kabul. For the present, however, all was more or less well, and much of the increase could be taken up by spreading the inefficient farming to a height of as much as 1500 feet above the plain; the inefficiency having the cardinal advantage of providing part-time employment for more men, with plenty of time for rest and conversation over their *chillums* (clay water-pipes).

We ourselves came in for no small interest: at any time during the day one might see a crowd around our Land-Rover, but the occasion to which, as our habits became known, more and more began to come, was the nightly tuning-in to the B.B.C. on our car wireless. Admiring sighs would greet the appearance of the little red light; a hush of expectation would settle as the first crackle was heard, and the level voice of an announcer in London riveted a hundred eyes on the car in breathless attention. The climax was usually the programme in Persian to which we turned afterwards, the spectators' admiration being unbounded on their learning that we could get them their own language.

The good impression produced by the wireless was however offset by a sinister discovery which someone made about us. Word of it was soon round the village, and it was not long before I was asked to join a party at tea and for an interview. The usual politenesses were cut rather short, as it was obvious that there was an important question in the offing. After a few minutes, one of them, unable to restrain his anxiety one moment longer, burst out:

"*But where is your wife?*"

A buzz of approval greeted the pertinence of this inquiry. It stopped abruptly when I told them that we had no wives, not being married.

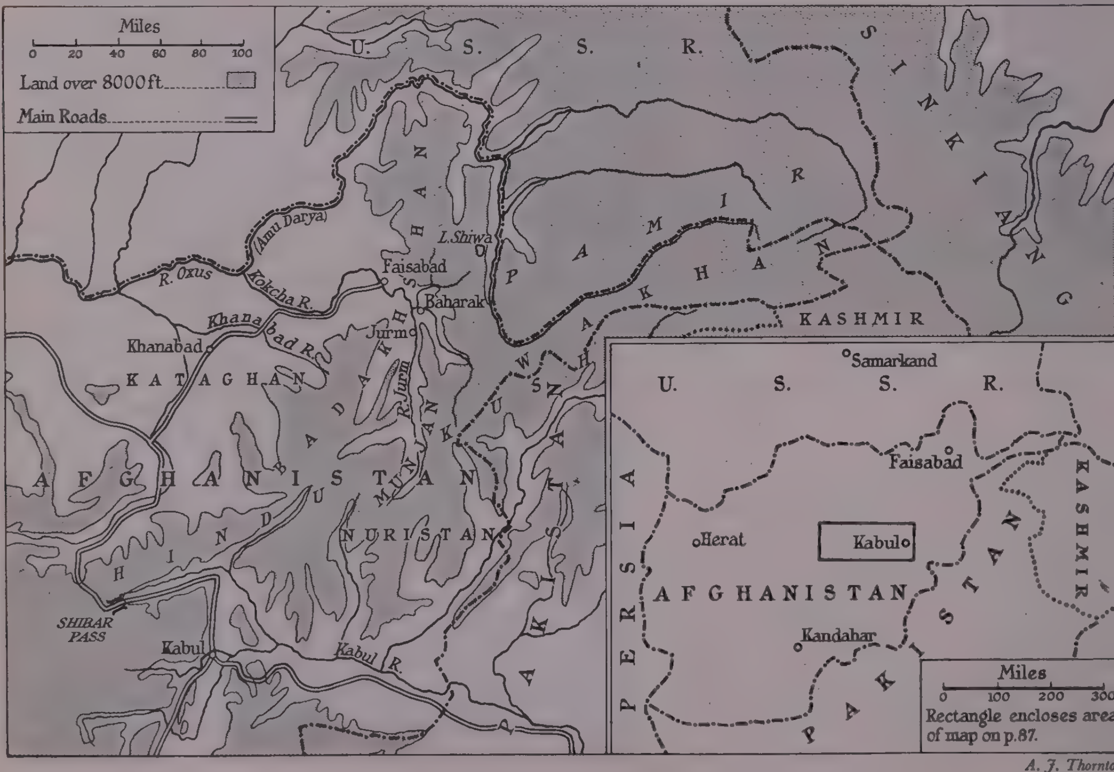
"Then . . . how do you manage? Are you then very poor? Or are women in Inglistan very expensive?"

I explained that in England we marry "fairly old", and that we do not buy our women, but ask them to marry. At this there were expressions of horror, which did not entirely cease when I pointed out the resultant saving in money.

"What are your women like?"

"They are without exception tall, with hair the colour of gold and eyes of deep blue; their skin is the colour of milk." With an inward apology to English womanhood I added: "And they are broad, very broad, like oxen."

I watched their eyes light up, only to see



A. J. Thornto

Kuchis, nomads who move between the Oxus and Lake Shiwa in northern Afghanistan. They prefer to travel by night, and at daybreak the women are given the work of setting up the black tents. Their transport is mostly by horse or camel; the Tajiks, in contrast, make great use of donkeys

the fire die out on hearing that even the rich could have but one of these paragons apiece.

"I have ten thousand *afghanis*," volunteered a peasant who had not yet spoken, "and that is enough to buy me a wife from the Kuchis when they come down from Lake Shiwa. If I gave it to you who are poor and cannot afford a wife" (he still clung to the fallacy), "could you send me a woman from Inglistan?"

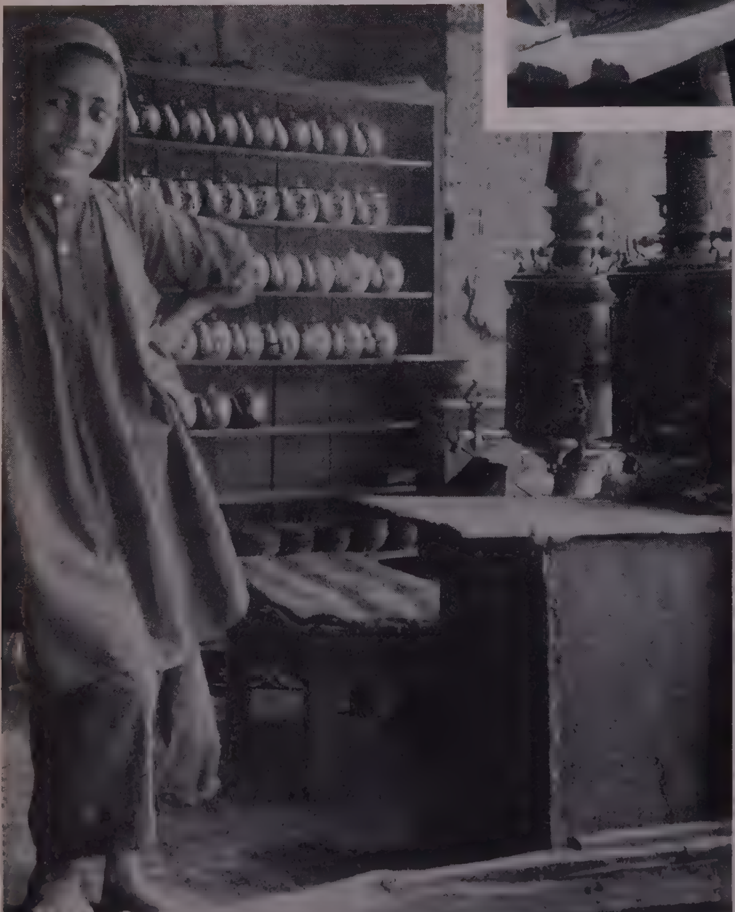
My regret at my inability to oblige did nothing to raise their estimation of me, so I made haste to change from a subject so detrimental to British prestige, and asked about the Kuchis, or nomads.

"Oh, they are just people—Pathans of a sort—who spend most of their year in the plains of the Amu Darya" (River Oxus). "For the summer they come up through here on their way to Lake Shiwa, where they go for the summer—as do many of our own people, since the pastures are very good for our flocks. The men from Baharak and the Kuchis camp very close together. Do you see that barracks over there? That is the barracks of the *marz-bani*, the frontier police; it is almost empty now, as most of them are up by Shiwa, seeing that no-one goes too near the *Rusi*. But the Kuchis are quite all right, and very rich. Their women are easily the best to be had around here, and the most expensive by far. Now if for ten thousand *afghanis* I can buy one of *them*, surely . . .?"

"How do you get on with them here?" I asked hastily.

"Very well indeed. Their numbers are getting smaller, though we hear that the government are trying to make them settle and take up farming. The Kuchis do not like the idea, and would rather go on as they have always done, but I think the government will win in the end. It will be a pity for us. Of course, we do not see much of them here, as they join the road about ten miles nearer Faisabad, but we like them. They sell us cattle and we sell them grain during the time

(Right) *A melon shop in Khanabad. Melons are a safer form of thirst-quencher than water, and are very cheap. One like those on the left would cost about three* afghanis. (*An afghani is worth twopence.*) (Below) *Tea is another safe thirst-quencher and is drunk at all hours of the day. The tea itself comes from India, the samovars from Russia, the teapots from Japan and the water for making the tea from the gutter*



that they pass through: it usually lasts some three days. We think they are rather stupid, as they pay far too much for what they buy—rather like you," he added bluntly.

* * * * *

Apart from the main occupation of agriculture, an occupation dependent upon a complicated canal-irrigation system which brings the water down from the rivers to the fields of rice, barley, melons and wheat, the only other industry is fishing. This is carried out by a few experts by means of conical nets. One of these *mahigirs*, a very friendly fellow by the name of Majid, invited me to come and watch him at his work. He had been planning to fish in the grey-brown waters of the Jurm river, and it was with some difficulty that I persuaded him to start off in the brilliant blue of the Zardeh, as this would make for better colour-photography. His objection to the Zardeh was simple: "*Mahi nist!*" There were no fish. Finally he gave in, and set about casting the net with a peculiar circular motion and drawing it out of the rocky stream, sometimes with one fish in it, sometimes with as many as five, but rarely with none. In the space of just over half an hour he had caught over twenty of the *shir-mahi* (lion-fish) which are presumably what Marco Polo described as trout in his *Travels*. Still protesting "*Mahi nist*", Majid moved off to more fruitful waters.

It was a great disappointment to us that we were not allowed to visit Shiwa, the 12,000-foot-high lake to the north-east of us. "The Russians would be *furious* if they learned that you had been so near their frontier," 'Ata Mohammed explained. Everyone in Baharak talked about the lake, everyone had been there, and news had just come through that it had frozen over and that the yearly exodus was beginning. In order to see it, we set out on the road back to Khanabad, and for some

On the road from Faisabad to Khanabad a bridge had collapsed under the weight of a lorry. A new one was soon built, a much solider structure than the old one whose remnants can be seen behind it. When the last of the poplar logs had been laid the gaps were filled with straw and earth

The Sub-Commissioner of Jurm, in Badakhshan. His work is largely paternal, including giving advice, settling quarrels and supervising labour as well as keeping an eye on foreigners

time we had the Kuchi caravans constantly with us. They travelled by night and we by day, and on one occasion we woke up to find that several score of these people had camped around us. That they were indeed rich was confirmed when they offered to pay for the cascara that we had given them for 'pains', and when they offered to buy a pair of binoculars. They spoke Pashtu amongst themselves, but all knew enough Persian to be able to speak both to us and to the crowd of Tajiks who invariably gathered around them. Their women hardly bothered to veil themselves, and the edges of their brightly coloured clothes were sewn over with coins. No objections were made to our watching a woman suckling her child, but the line was finally drawn at the unwinking eyes and long inquisitive snouts of our photographic and cine apparatus.

Our departure from the province was eventful. After farewells to all our friends, we set out once more along the road to Khanabad, which was now flooded, so that we eventually bogged in three feet of water and had to use our Land-Rover's winch to pull ourselves out. There followed a nightmare drive over the same hair-raising track by which we had come, but this time most of its inadequate width was taken up by herds of sheep, goats or camels, until we came to a place where for no apparent reason a large crowd had gathered. We eventually saw that half a mile further on a bridge had collapsed under the weight of one of the inevitably overloaded Afghan lorries, which had fallen some forty feet into a ravine. The District Commissioner hurried up, a broad smile upon his face. "All is well. Only one person has been killed, and the lorry has been taken to Khanabad, where they will fix it somehow. The new bridge will *insh'Allah* be ready in six hours."

It was a remarkable demonstration: several hundred coolies were building a new bridge out of poplar trunks packed with straw, whilst others were carting enormous loads across the half-completed structure from a lorry on the Khanabad side to a waiting lorry on the other. Every so often there would be a loud cry of *A-a-a-a-h* as a charge of dynamite sent a shower of rock and sand skywards. The work went on through the heat of midday, whilst we had a leisurely three-hour luncheon with the Commissioner in his shelter of leafy branches. Finally the bridge was ready. A vehicle—ours—was detailed to test its strength. As it reached the other side, a long cheer went up from the workers, who were obviously surprised at the quality of their handiwork.

"You are now in Kataghan," the Commissioner told us. "The road to Kabul is clear." With a grand gesture. he waved us on.

The Hazarajat of Afghanistan

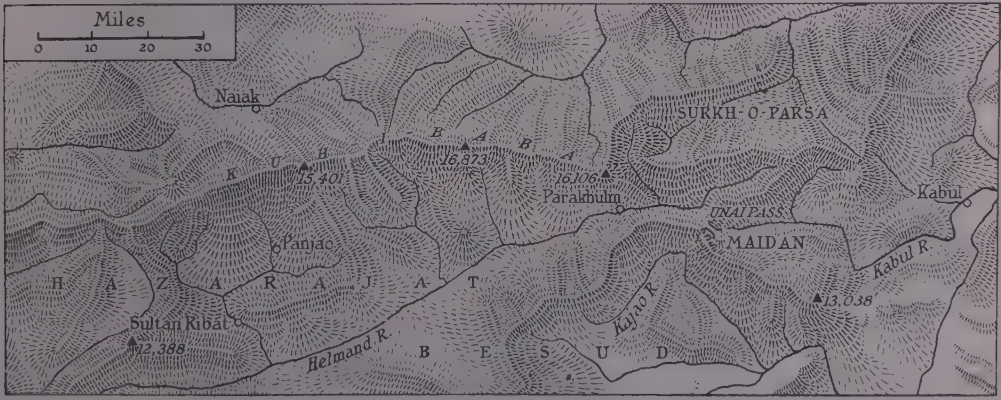
by WILFRED THESIGER, D.S.O.

There is a tradition that the Hazaras who inhabit a large area in Central Afghanistan are the descendants of Mongols who were left behind in the 13th century by Jagatai, Jenghis Khan's son, or by Mangu, his grandson. Certainly the Hazaras are markedly Mongolian in appearance but the question of their true origin is a matter of controversy. Some still survive who are Mongolian-speakers, but most Hazaras speak a rather corrupt dialect of Persian, with an admixture of Mongol words. They are Shia Muslims, whereas the Pathans, Tajiks and Uzbeks who surround them belong to the Sunni sect of Islam, and this religious difference tends to isolate them from their neighbours. The area that they chiefly inhabit, known as the Hazarajat, includes Kuh-i-Baba, a rather uninspiring mountain range between 15,000 and 17,000 feet high with few peaks, which runs from east to west for about eighty miles and forms the western extremity of the Hindu Kush. Both sides of the range are seamed with a succession of valleys, and although the slopes of these valleys are generally steep they consist of earth and screes covered with thistles, coarse grass, rhubarb and cushion plants. The mountain is devoid of trees except for a few willows and poplars cultivated in the valley-bottoms.

There are many springs on Kuh-i-Baba and streams in all the valleys. Wandering slowly on foot through this country I soon discovered that every fold and wrinkle in the ground to which water could be conducted was cultivated, with barley, wheat, peas, beans, lentils, vetch, clover and lucerne, and even the steep hillsides above the villages were sown with rain-grown wheat. In some of these mountain valleys the houses are strung out along the hillsides above a narrow ribbon of cultivation, farmhouse succeeding to farmhouse throughout the day's march; in others they are grouped in small villages. The houses are built of mud and stones and most of them are very primitive; usually they consist of three or four rooms and a dark narrow passageway. Most villages have watch-towers built either in the village itself or on the surrounding hills to guard the approaches.

Although the Hazaras are primarily agriculturalists many of them own large flocks of sheep and goats and some small, black, humped cattle. I was told that they supply nearly all the clarified butter or ghi *which is sold in Kabul.*

These Hazaras are obviously an extremely hardy race. I was constantly surprised that such large communities could live through the long winter months at altitudes where the cold is so intense and in a region where fuel is so scarce. They are also very industrious and struck me as good farmers with an understanding and love of their land.



A. J. Thornton

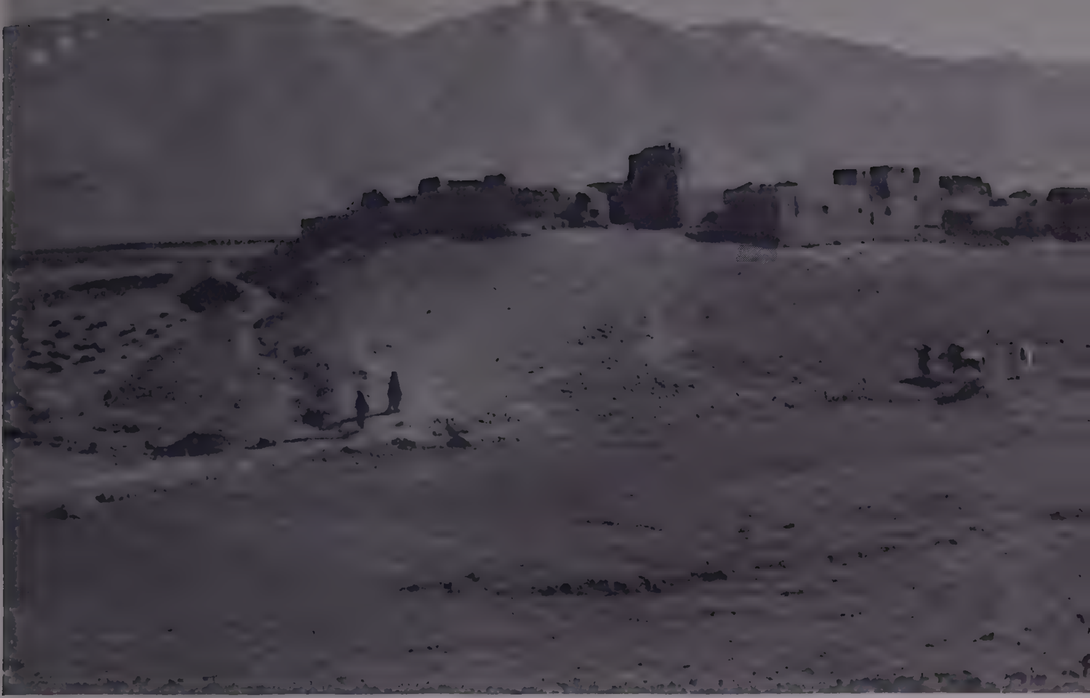
All photographs by the author

(Opposite) *A Hazara tribesman, wear
the turban which is almost universal am
them today. He might well be a descendan
the Mongol warriors who are supposed
have settled in Afghanistan in the Mid
Ages. For some ninety years Hazaras ser
with distinction in the Indian Army: in 1
their own regiment, the 106th Hazara Pi
eers, was raised at Quetta on the instructi
of Lord Kitchener. Natural good shots, t
won a great many rifle competitions. Dur
World War I they saw active service
France, Persia and Mesopotamia, and m
of them were decorated for gallantry. The
after it became more difficult to recruit the
in 1932-3 all Pioneer Regiments, includ
the Hazara Pioneers, were disbanded;
at the Afghan Government's request no m
Hazaras were enlisted in the Indian Ar*

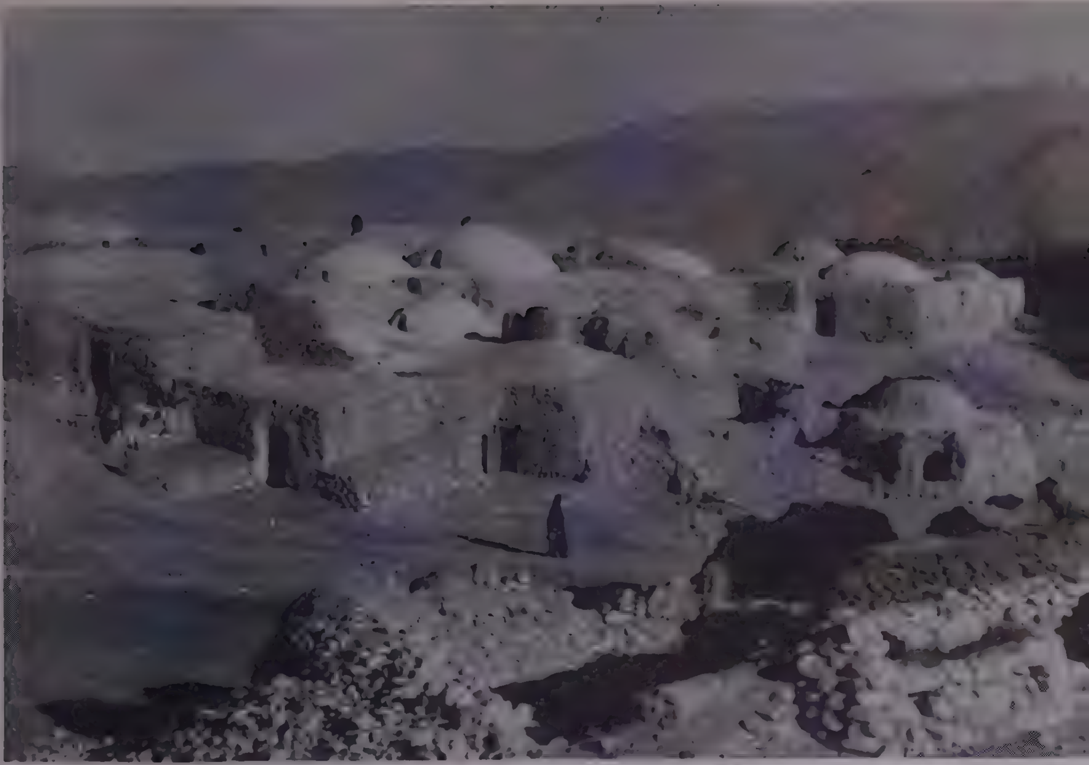
(Left) *Until recently the Hazaras commo
wore lambskin caps similar to those seen
Central Asia, but now only older men do*

(Below) *A waistcoat or jerkin, someti
of leather, worn over a long cotton sh
and trousers, is the usual summer dress, w
a coat and top-coat in winter. The knit
woollen cap which the boy is wearing was
found by the author outside Surkh-o-Pa*

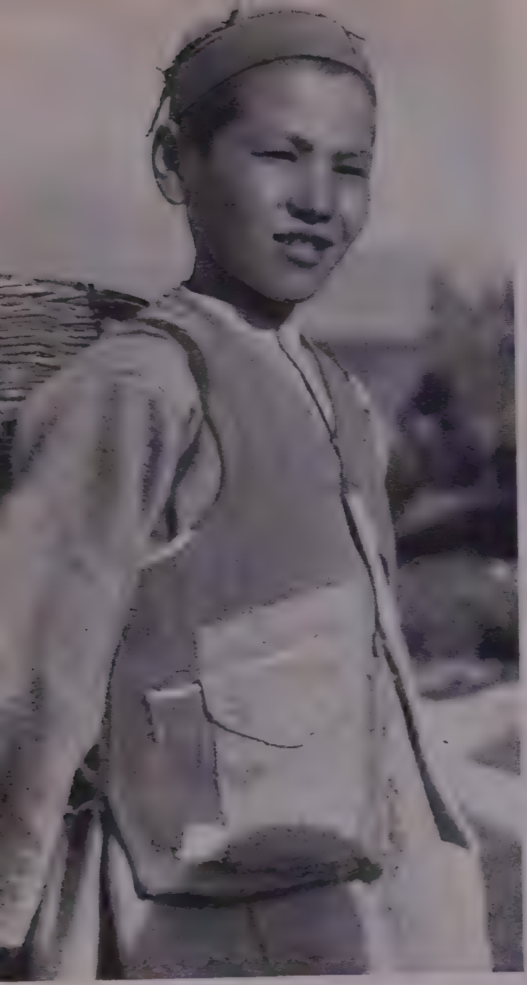
(Above) *The Maidan district from which the author started his journey into the Hazarajat is a thickly wooded valley at the head of the Kabul River. It presents a striking contrast with the apparently barren hillsides of the Hazarajat* (below); *yet there each valley-bottom has its stream and cultivation*

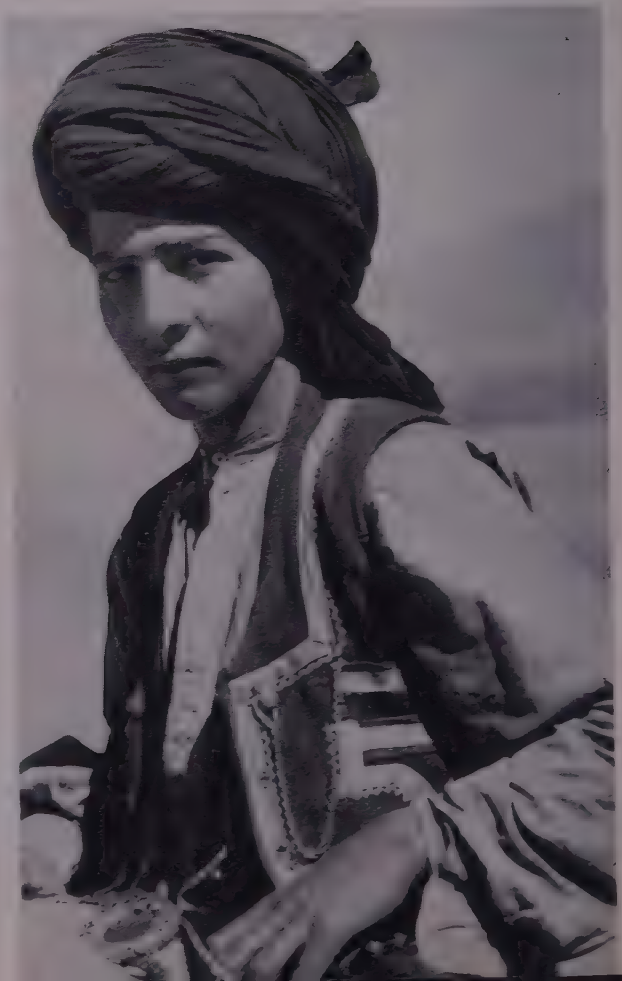


(Above) *A Hazara village on a rise above the broad valley of the Helmand River. Beyond is the Ku* *Baba with a few pockets of snow still lying on its upper slopes in September. The winter snowfal* *the chief source of the streams along which are planted* (below) *the poplars used for building-tim*



(Opposite) *The Hazara chiefs usually live in large well-constructed forts. These are rectangular in shape with the rooms looking onto a central courtyard. Square or circular towers guard the outer corners and the single entrance is closed with a strong wooden gate. The flat roofs are of mud supported on beams of poplar.* (Above) *A village in the northern Hazarajat. Where timber is scarce the houses are roofed with domes built of stones projecting from the flat expanse of mud roof which may cover many houses.* (Right) *An old man bringing in a load of forage from the hillsides; piles of this can be seen in the foreground of the photograph opposite. The Hazaras spend much of their time collecting fuel and forage from the mountainsides to tide them through the winter months, when the cold in these villages at 8000-12,000 feet is intense*





Above *A fourteen-year-old Hazara boy whose Mongol descent is manifest in his features.*
Right *A sixteen-year-old Kuchi lad. Unlike the Hazaras whom the author found hardy and industrious but inhospitable, the nomadic Kuchis, of Pathan stock, are friendly, amusing and gay. They are detested by the Hazaras, whom they in their turn despise though trading relations are nevertheless active between them*

As well as owning large flocks of sheep and goats, the Kuchis bring with them from Pakistan (by donkey and camel) cloth, sugar, tea and other goods, which they trade with the Hazaras for grain and flour, on the way to their summer grazing grounds in the highlands of the Kuh-i-Baba. They travel to these up the valleys in the early summer and return again in the autumn

Irish Peat and Electricity

by J. ALLAN CASH

IRISH peasants and farmers have heated their homes with peat for untold centuries, and will doubtless continue to do so for many a year to come. One-seventh of Ireland is covered with this low-grade fuel which, it is now fully realized, is extremely valuable because of its abundance. Valuable, that is, for commercial purposes, not merely for the heating of individual houses, a fact which has been officially recognized by the government of the Republic of Ireland since World War II. Today a considerable proportion of the total electricity produced in Ireland comes from peat-fired power stations, and a number of new stations are under construction in various parts of the country, which will further utilize this wide-spread natural fuel. It is an exciting story, and a surprising one to those who believe that Ireland is still a backward country where nothing is ever done on a big scale. The story of peat and power is really big, as I saw for myself last year.

I went out one day from Dublin to the Timahoe bog in County Kildare, about thirty miles away. Now, a large Irish peat bog is virtually unapproachable; from the air it looks like a series of small lakes and flashes in the midst of a flat dark area of land. No roads or paths of any kind go through it, for the simple reason that anyone venturing on it for more than a few yards would probably disappear for ever in a watery grave. The fact is that a peat bog is nearly all water, up to 93 per cent, to be precise, and the peat cannot be won and used until a large part of this water is removed.

What I saw at Timahoe was, first, some office buildings, workshops and canteens on the edge of the bog, and a light railway line running out on a ballast bank and disappearing into the gloomy haze of the bog. Far away on the horizon I could see the strange shapes of one or two giant machines at work, and I also noticed that the bog was criss-crossed with ditches ten or twelve feet deep with a few feet of water in them. No other water was visible; the pools and flashes on this bog, at least, had disappeared. The bog had been drained, the first essential step in procuring peat on a large scale.

An engineer took me out onto the bog on one of the little diesel engines used on the railway. Before leaving he switched on a short-wave radio telephone set in his office and called to one of the machines, to find out which were working and where they were, in order not to waste my time. Every peat cutter was equipped with radio telephone, a most valuable time saver.

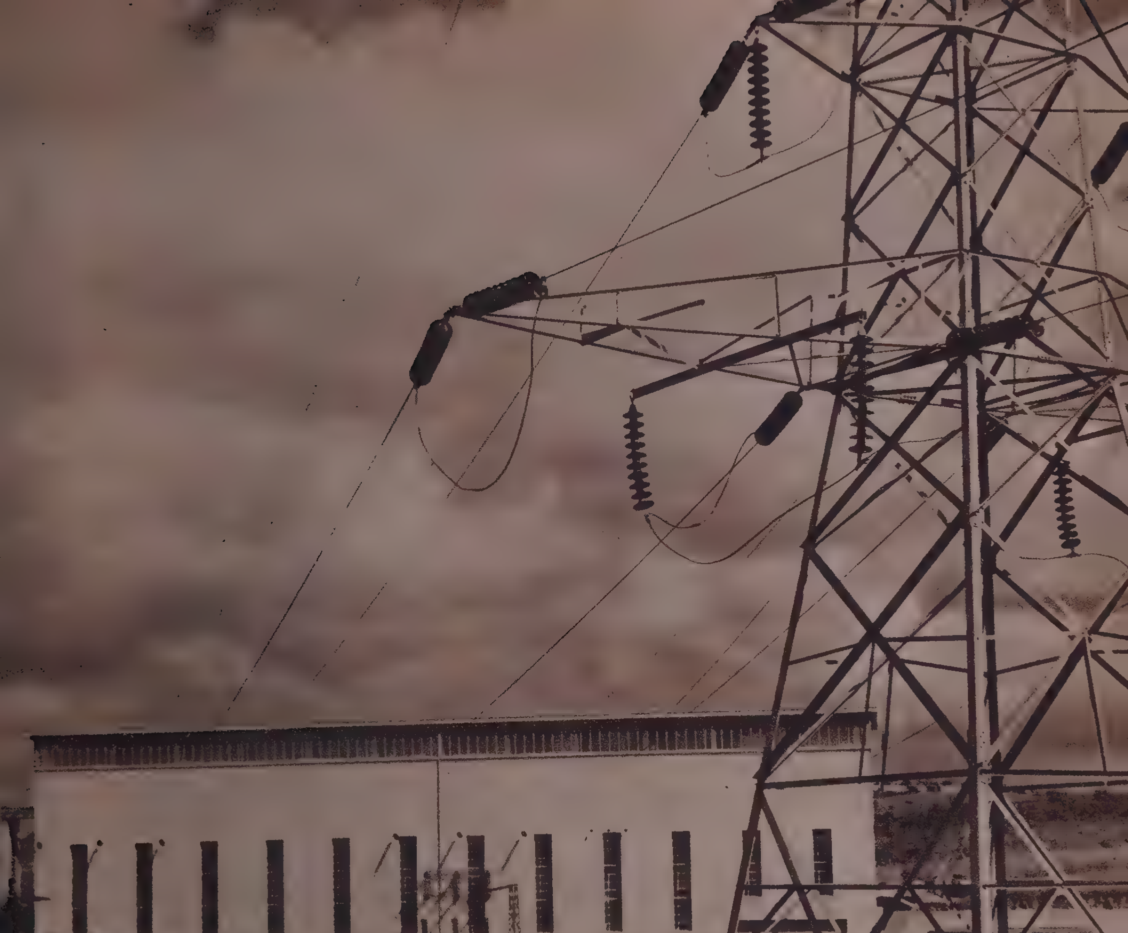
We rattled and lurched across the bog for several miles, then turned off the main ballasted line onto a branch line simply laid on the bog. But thanks to the deep drainage ditches the surface was now quite firm. The railway line did not sink, and there was no danger in our walking anywhere.

The machine we approached was a sod peat bagger, an ungainly giant that spread itself across sixty yards of the bog. Briefly, it ate up continually a two-yard width of peat ten feet deep, macerated it internally, and then fed it out along a spreader arm nearly sixty yards long over the level bog on the other side. Every minute or so this enormously long sod was tipped off the arm onto the ground.

I soon noticed that the giant machine was slowly, almost imperceptibly, creeping forward, and the spreader arm, mounted on broad caterpillars and rollers, was moving forward with it at exactly the same speed. Behind the arm, and attached to it, was a line of discs which slowly cut the long sod into lengths of about a foot as the arm crept forward, leaving them on the ground to dry. For hundreds of yards behind this cutting machine the level surface of the bog was covered with gleaming wet lines of sods, all lying close together and each of them sixty yards long. Where the peat had been dug away was a boggy, wet cutaway area some ten feet lower down.

In advance of the cutter another machine, known as a sod peat stripper, mounted on wide caterpillars, goes forward along the edge of the cut and peels off all the heather and grass and uneven surface so that the cutting machine will have a level surface to work on. This refuse is tipped into the already excavated area, called the cutaway.

When the long, cut-up sods of peat have been left for a few weeks the short lengths are lifted and propped up against each other to dry further. This is a hand process, known as footing, one of the last to be mechanized. Coming into use now are enormous rollers,



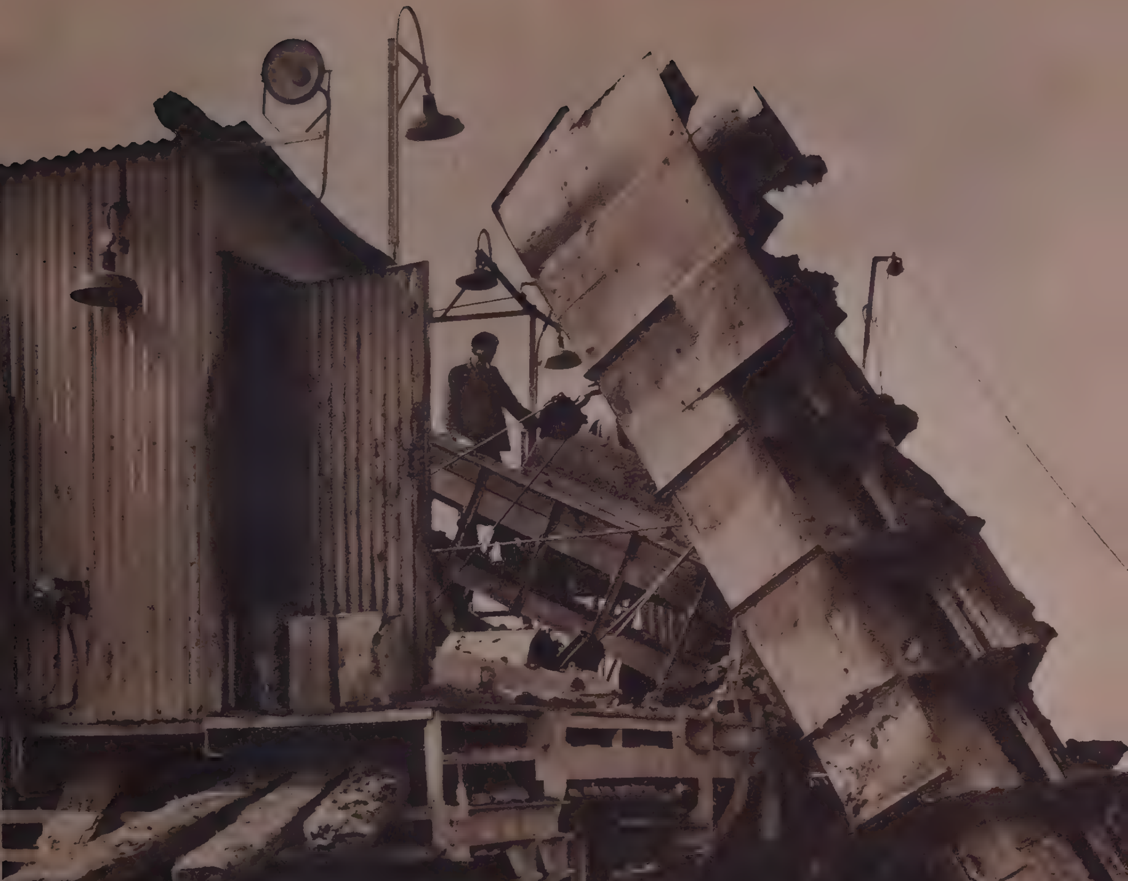
All photographs by J. A

All over Ireland new power stations are being built; some being operated by water-power and others by peat. Before long electricity will become available for domestic and industrial use throughout the country. (Above) *The hydro-electric power station at Cliff, on the River Erne, produces 20,000 kilowatts of power. Collaboration with Northern Ireland was necessary here, as the Erne is the boundary between the two "Irelands"*

Putting up power lines for the widely scattered rural consumers in the wilds of Connemara. No expense or trouble seems to be spared in difficult country, and poles are erected on the most unpromising terrain. The whole country is divided into areas of approximately twenty-five square miles, the electrification of each one being completed in turn. This year more than a hundred such areas will be completed, at a cost of some £2,000,000. It is the aim of the Electricity Supply Board that within a few years every house in Ireland will be able to have electricity. The people in rural districts take readily to electricity, two-thirds of them having their houses wired as soon as it arrives. Charges for wiring are quite moderate, no charge being made as far as the meter

A lady in Connemara tunes in on her new mains radio set. She has only recently had electricity laid on to her little house and she is delighted with it. After electric light had replaced the old oil-lamps, her first thought was for a radio set which would work off the power. The old drudgery of taking batteries to be charged is now a thing of the past, and it is cheaper this way. Irons and kettles come next, then electric cookers, with fires well behind. Thus the household pets remain as yet little affected by the change. They still warm themselves in front of the peat fire, for electric fires are not so far common among the appliances bought by country folk. It takes a lot to convince the people of Ireland that there is anything better than peat for heating their homes

Peat-cutting like this is a common sight in most parts of Ireland. It has gone on for untold centuries and will doubtless long continue. Two are needed to cut peat properly: one to dig, the other to lift the turf onto the dry ground above. Then follows the slow business of drying in the sun and wind



A sod peat bagger at work on an Irish bog. After the surface has been prepared, this machine digs down nine or ten feet, macerates the peat and feeds it out over the surface of the bog on the far side by means of a spreader arm sixty yards long. There it dries, being turned by hand or by other machines. Then it is taken by light railway to the power station

(Above) *Allenwood power station, which produces electricity from sod peat, consuming nearly 250,000 tons of it each year. It is situated on the edge of the Timahoe bog, in County Kildare.* (Below) *The new village of Coill Dubh, which has been built by the Irish Peat Board to house some of the workers on the Timahoe bog. There are houses here for 156 families, as well as shops and a church. Several such village schemes are in operation*

Inside a modern creamery in the open country near Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry. New dairies, all electrically operated, are now springing up all over Ireland. This is one of the many industrial uses to which electricity is put in the Ireland of today covered with spikes which pick up the half-dried sods and feed them into a chute which deposits them in a long heap behind the machine. This is known as a windrow, where the wind can blow all through the pile and dry the peat even further. To continue this process a windrow turner is used to lift the sods, stir them up and deposit them in a new row ten feet away, with those which were at the bottom now at the top of the pile.

Another vast machine, a sod peat automatic collector, eventually concentrates several of these windrows into a long heap of much bigger proportions, known as a rick. Alongside this, a temporary length of railway line is laid, and the dried peat sods are loaded automatically onto trains and hauled away.

On the edge of this particular bog the Allenwood power station has been built, the last word in steam-generated electric power production. The light railway lines out on the bog terminate here and deposit nearly 250,000 tons of peat a year. A storage heap of 25,000 tons is maintained constantly, but during the collecting season — spring and summer—truck loads of peat are hauled up to roof level on the power station and emptied directly into giant hoppers above the boilers. Inside the power station two big steam turbo-generating sets produce 20,000 kilowatts of power each, humming away continuously, day and night, fed by steam from the peat-fired boilers.

At Portarlington, some twenty miles away, another similar station generates 25,000 kilowatts of power. This was the first one to be opened and both have proved to be enormously successful. Each has a lofty cooling-tower—a strange sight in the open Irish countryside—but only short chimneys, from which hardly any smoke issues; peat burnt in modern boilers creates little smoke and leaves virtually no ash.

Another method of winning peat on a large scale is now superseding the sod peat process, and that is milled peat. The bog is drained in the same way and the surface cleared. Then a milling machine, like a giant mowing machine mounted on caterpillar tracks, cuts half an inch—no more—of the surface off, leaving it lying on the ground. This dries much more quickly than sod peat and with less trouble. Enormous harrows turn it and stir it periodically, then forty-foot-wide bulldozer blades push the dried peat into long heaps. From these, harvesters pick up the peat and build it into ricks, and again the light railway carries it to the power stations.

The whole process is then repeated on the same site and can continue until the bottom of the peat is reached, many years from now. Thus the railway lines do not have to be constantly moved, as with sod peat, and much of the equipment is simpler.

Seeing peat produced on such a vast scale, I could not help asking, despite the enormous areas of these individual bogs:

"How long will these bogs last?"

I was thinking of the workers as well as the power stations.

"Oh, twenty-five to thirty years, at this rate of production," came the answer.

"And what happens then?" I asked, awkwardly I suppose.

"Oh well," I was told, "that is about the normal life of a power station anyway."

This seemed typically Irish reasoning to me, as I have never heard of a power station wearing out beyond repair! But the answer was not really so crazy, because much of the land, after the peat has been removed, will be suitable for farming or afforestation. Doubtless many of the people now working on the peat bogs will settle on the reclaimed land, or work in the forests, and so will not be rendered destitute. But what fuel will be used in the power stations then is anybody's guess. Perhaps atomic energy will save the day. Actually there is much additional peat near the power stations which can be worked when the big bogs are exhausted.

New power stations to utilize milled peat are under construction or projected at Ferbane, Co. Offaly (60,000 kilowatts); Derrygreenagh, Co. Offaly (40,000 kilowatts); Oweniny, Co. Mayo (40,000 kilowatts); and Blackwater, Co. Offaly (40,000 kilowatts) and another sod-peat-fired station is going up at Lanesborough, Co. Longford (20,000 kilowatts). Besides these large ones, four stations of only 5000 kilowatts each are being built at Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry; Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare; Screeb, Co. Galway; and Gweedore, Co. Donegal. These will use hand-won sod peat which will be supplied by local farmers to augment the comparatively low incomes they derive from farming in somewhat poor country.

Peat production on this large scale is carried out by the Peat Board, sometimes called the Turf Board, or in Irish—Bord na Mona. This is an organization set up by the government of the Republic of Ireland in 1946, after successful experiments had been carried out on the big bog which now feeds the Portarlington power station. The Board is authorized to spend up to £14,000,000 of public funds, repayable with interest.

Production is continually expanding, and the aim of the Board is to produce 1,000,000 tons of sod peat annually as well as 2,500,000 tons of milled peat. Some sod peat is used in homes and in factories, and a little of the milled peat is made into briquettes. But the majority of both kinds goes to power stations.

7000 people are already employed by the Peat Board at peak periods, as well as 400 engineers, technicians and office staff. Peat cutting and drying can only be done in the spring and summer. The weather is unsuitable for drying during the autumn and winter, but much maintenance and other work goes on then, and of course sales of peat continue. 2000 men are housed in hostels, complete with canteens, club rooms, etc., some of which I saw at Tigh Mochua, on the edge of the Timahoe bog. A mile from here a complete new village has been built—Coill Dubh—to house 156 families, with shops and a church. Other village schemes totalling 410 houses have been completed and more are planned. There is also a research station operated by the Board at Droichead Nua.

The electric power stations are operated by the Electricity Supply Board, another government organization. This was established in 1927 to take over the big Shannon hydro-electric station, then nearing completion at Ardnacrusha, near Limerick. It was the aim of the Board to acquire all existing electric production and distribution in the country, to develop and expand it into a national grid-system. The Board was to provide all the power that would be needed in the future, and to develop all means of producing it. Hence water-power, coal and oil were all used in power stations built before the war.

Prior to 1928, very little electricity was produced in Ireland, only 50,000,000 units, in fact. Today production exceeds 1,500,000,000 units, and this will be trebled by 1961. In addition to the peat-fired stations, a number of new hydro-electric stations are now under construction as well as additional coal- and oil-fired ones which, when completed, altogether will nearly double the 1953 production of electric power. Whereas before 1946 it was virtually only the towns which had electricity, the avowed aim of the Board now is to bring electricity to practically every house in Ireland within the next few years.

In rural districts the countryside is divided up into areas of approximately twenty-five square miles each. Several hundred areas have already been completed and the present annual rate exceeds 100 areas. Already more than half of the rural population has electricity available. It has been found that when electricity first arrives in a new district, more than two-thirds of the householders have it installed at once. Others soon follow as the benefits become apparent.

As I wandered about in western Ireland, I kept my eyes open for electric power lines going down to small houses and cottages. Frequently I went to the door and asked the lady of the house what she thought of electricity. The answer was always favourable.

"No more oil lamps, thank goodness," was a common remark. I was never rebuffed by these charming Irish people. Often I was invited to step inside, and these houses varied from old and primitive to new and modern. Yet many of the old thatched cottages were the cleanest and tidiest inside. Everyone has a radio set in Ireland and, apart from lights, a mains radio set seems to be the first new appliance to be bought in rural areas.

"It is a treat not to have to worry any more with batteries," I was told over and over again.

Electric irons come next in popularity, in this land where most of the washing is done at home in country districts. Then electric kettles, followed by cookers and fires. Washing-machines and boilers at present are found in less than 20 per cent of the houses in even the better-developed areas, but the demand for all kinds of appliances is steadily rising as the benefits become apparent.

I came across a small garage in Connemara where the owner had gone all electric in no uncertain way. His petrol pumps were operated by electric motors, his garage had not only electric-powered drills and other machine tools, but a complete electric welding set as well. In his home alongside he had an electric cooker, a refrigerator, a washing-machine, an iron, and under the picture of Christ, found in every Catholic home in Ireland, a small electric lamp containing a glowing cross in place of the usual candle.

Everywhere across the Connemara countryside poles and power lines were in evidence, some going long distances across bog and mountainside to reach an isolated house. Thousands of miles of new lines are erected each year, tens of thousands of new consumers connected. It is a grand scheme, costing over £2,000,000 per annum for new distribution alone, and it will go on for another four or five years until Ireland is fully electrified. Far from being a backward country, Ireland will soon be one of the most advanced in the world, at least as far as electrification goes.

The Grenadier Guards in the Low Countries

by NIGEL NICOLSON, M.P.

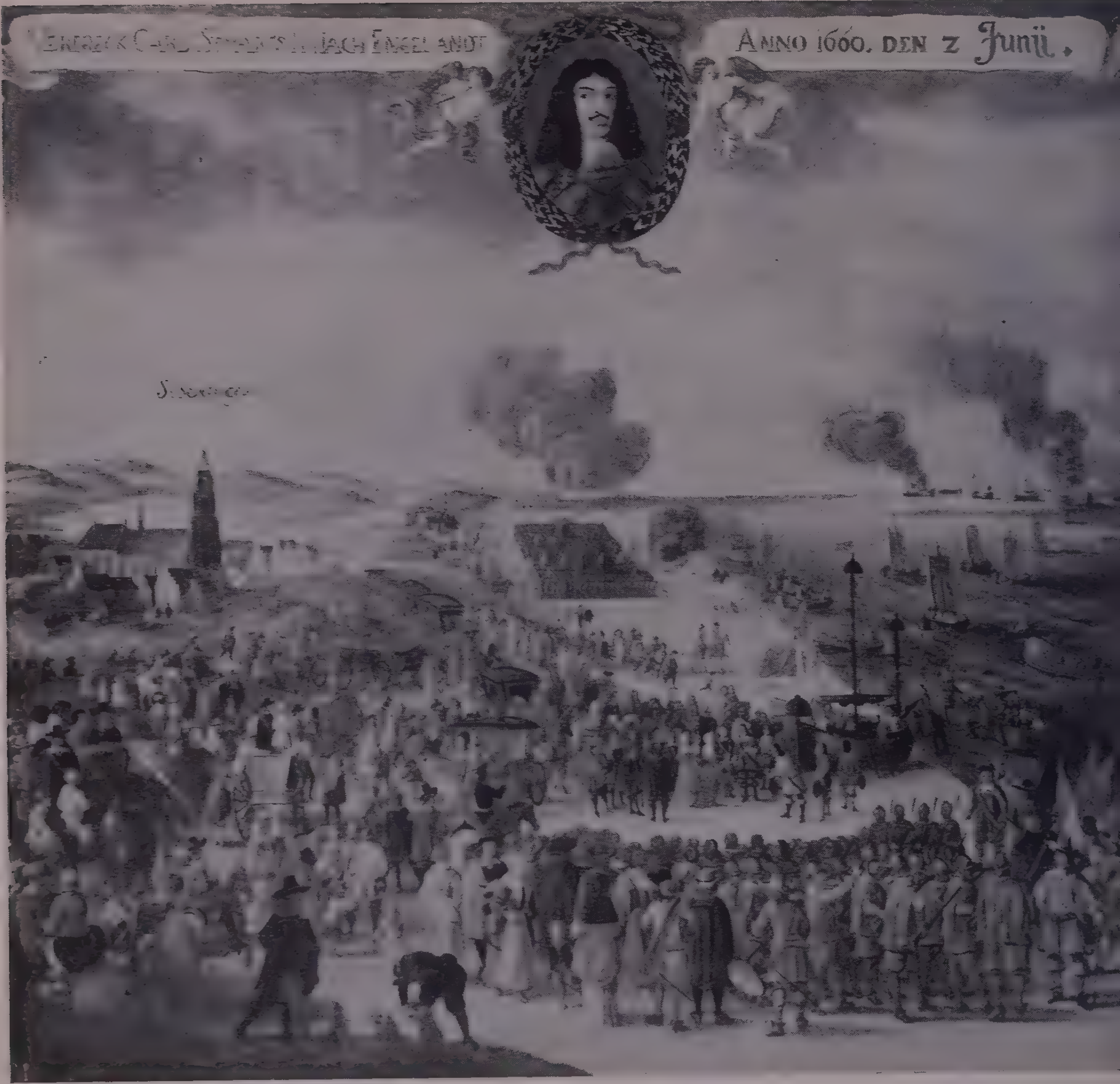
The Tercentenary of the Grenadier Guards is being celebrated this summer, notably by an Exhibition portraying the Regiment's history, held at St James's Palace and open from May 30 until June 23. To mark the occasion we have great pleasure in publishing the following article, linking the Regiment with one field of its campaigns, by the author of its official history in World War II

TIME and again, throughout three centuries, the Grenadiers have returned to fight in the land where their Regiment was born, the borderland of Holland and Belgium, of western Germany and northern France, the dyke-land, the meeting-place and tilt-yard of Latin and Saxon, the "cockpit of Europe". In mediaeval times, it was Normandy and the Pas de Calais which attracted invading forces from both sides of the Channel. But since armies began to grow in size and strategy became subtler, the names of Brussels, Antwerp, Namur, Liége, Louvain, Dunkirk, Walcheren, Rotterdam, appeared and were triplicated upon the colours of British and foreign Regiments. The centuries wheel like battalions into line. In different circumstances, with different weapons, and in unconscious imitation of each other, the commanders of one age traverse the same ground, perform almost the same evolutions, as their predecessors and successors.

The men of the B.E.F. advancing to Mons on August 21, 1914, took up positions overlooking the battlefield of Malplaquet, and it was near there that the Grenadiers fired their first shots of World War I. On May 14, 1940, a Grenadier Battalion faced another German army on the River Dyle at Louvain, unaware in the stress and confusion of the moment how many of their forbears had picked on the same narrow ditch as a first line of defence. Trace the record of two summer months in 1692, and listen for the historical echoes. On June 2, William III withdrew his army from *Louvain* to the wooded area south-east of *Brussels*, after the French had captured *Namur*. On June 7 his Headquarters was at *Ramillies*. On July 2 a detached force, including Grenadiers, failed to capture *Mons* by a night-march, and on July 9 William reviewed his Guards on part of the later battlefield of *Waterloo*.

The key to the constant recurrence of these same names lies in the 18th-century description of Antwerp as "a pistol aimed at the heart of England". Possession of the Low Countries by an enemy came to be regarded as a threat to these islands more direct even than the presence of an army poised to invade them northwards across the Channel. The deep estuaries of the rivers of western Europe debouching into the North Sea provided a convenient approach for British armies into the heart of the continent, and the presence in the same area of the small group of proud nations which we now collectively call Benelux was a temptation to greater powers anxious to win new alliances or carve out new empires. For these different reasons, and in defiance of many different enemies, British armies have been drawn to the Low Countries by the same strategic instinct which caused Winston Churchill to send the Marines to hold Antwerp in 1914, on the flank of the German advance, and his ancestor to land in Holland in 1702 to capture the Netherland fortresses occupied by the French.

It is appropriate, then, that the Grenadier Guards should have had their origin at a key-point of later British continental strategy. In 1656, Charles II, an exile since the Battle of Worcester and then residing at Bruges, undertook to raise a body of troops for service with his new Spanish allies, while the King of Spain engaged to assist Charles with 6000 infantry and enough ships to transport them to England when a suitable opportunity arose. The Spaniards failed to keep their side of the bargain, and the Restoration was brought about by more peaceful means. But Charles raised his corps by appealing to the many loyal Englishmen resident abroad or willing to join him in exile, and "His Majesty's Royal Regiment of Guards" was among the new units formed by those who flocked to his colours. They were not called Grenadiers until after the Battle of Waterloo, when the name was conferred


ANNO 1660. DEN 2 Junii.

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The Caroline forerunners of the Grenadier Guards (right foreground) at the departure of Charles II from Scheveningen near The Hague in June 1660 for England and his Restoration. The Grenadiers (whom Charles had raised at Bruges in 1656) did not set foot on English soil until two years later

on them *honoris causa* for their defeat of the Grenadiers in Napoleon's Army. But the historical continuity between Charles II's *émigré* Regiment and the Grenadiers of today is beyond dispute. They are the senior Regiment of Foot Guards, or "First Guards". The Coldstream Guards, founded in 1650 as part of Cromwell's Army, can only claim chronological precedence by admitting to a temporary disloyalty to an English King. Their motto *Nulli Secundus* (Second to None) is an ingenious way out of this embarrassment.

The personal troops of an exiled and impoverished King, the Guards spent the first months of their existence in the coastal villages of Flanders, as the nucleus of a phantom invasion force with very few arms, no ammunition and almost no pay. By 1658 they had become part of a small Anglo-Spanish army of 6000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, and it was this force which fought and lost the Battle of the Downs on those same sand-dunes three miles east of Dunkirk from which the Grenadiers embarked in

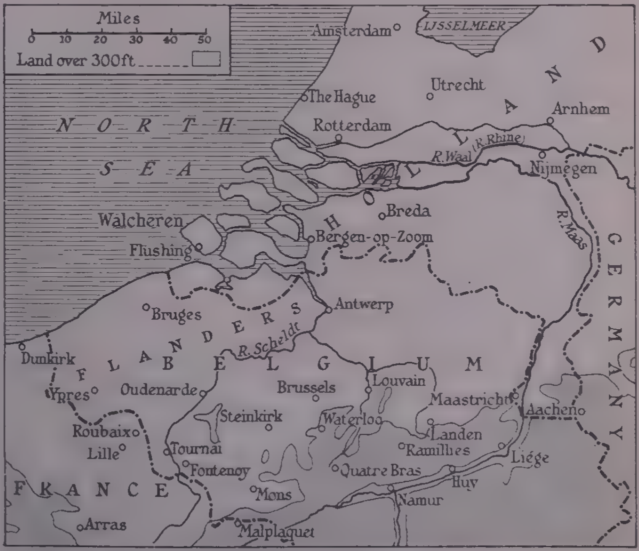
June 1940. It does not appear that the Cromwellian English engaged the Caroline Guards in direct combat, but it was the charge of the former against the flanking Spanish battalions that left the Guards isolated on their first battlefield. The French commander called on them to surrender, telling them that it was no use holding out since the rest of their Army had left the field. "It is not our custom to believe an enemy", was their reply, but they consented to send two officers under escort to the top of the highest sand-dune, and having confirmed that their Regiment was indeed alone, they surrendered, on condition that the French and not the Cromwellians accepted them as prisoners of war.

The Guards recovered from this initial disaster by escape, exchange and ransom; and having won over to their side many of Cromwell's own soldiers, they reformed their Regiment in time for the King's Restoration in 1660, remaining to garrison Dunkirk itself until its sale to Louis XIV in 1662, when the Guards set foot on their native shore for the first time in their Regimental existence.

From this moment onwards, the history of the First Guards is contained within the history of the British Army. Until the First and Second World Wars dispersed the Imperial armies beyond the capacities even of a Regiment expanded to six battalions or more, the Grenadiers fought in every major British campaign for a period of 250 years. We find them back in Holland during the Dutch Wars of the 1670s, and again during the last decade of the century. It is a revolving history of marches and countermarches. The armies were interlaced in a necklace of frontier forts. A summer's campaign, a winter's siege, confronted the rival commanders by a truer test of strategic planning and tactical skill than the later advances of massed armies which filled the same country from frontier to frontier in continuous lines. Hemmed in by the great rivers, their line of attack narrowed by bog and forest, their line of retreat threatened by the breaching of the dykes or unexpectedly widened by the freezing of huge flooded tracts of low land, the Guards and their fellow Regiments manoeuvred patiently backwards and forwards through the last decades of the 17th century and opening decades of the 18th. How little can the ordinary Guardsman have known of the reasons behind the order to advance or retire, to move or lie still! When told to shoot, he shot. This grim account of the battle of Landen, fought twenty miles north-west of Liége in July 1693, has an increasingly familiar ring:

> The allied infantry lining the entrenchment, amongst which were the two Battalions of the First Guards, allowed the French to approach within a short distance, when a sudden discharge of artillery and small arms covered the plain with dead and destroyed whole battalions who lay on the field in the same order as they stood in the ranks.

Half an army levelled in a few seconds to a mere pattern of fallen uniforms! The French lost 8000 of their best men in that battle, and though they won the day by a last desperate charge, they were left too weak to pursue. Again and again a decisive action fails to end the campaign. The very smallness of the numbers engaged, their powers of recuperation, the lack of intelligence about an enemy's movements, the 'close' season of winter, the division of the country by formidable water obstacles and the many channels of escape into a huge hinterland, prolonged these bitter wars and the suffering of the troops from years into decades. The Guards took their place at Oudenarde, Ramillies and Malplaquet; they helped to repulse the Duke of Burgundy from Nijmegen by mounting 150 guns upon its walls. They fought at Dettingen. And in 1745, we catch this glimpse of them at the Battle of Fontenoy:



A. J. Thornton

By courtesy of the Parker Gallery

The Battle of Ramillies: a contemporary print. Marlborough's victory over the French in May 1706 was fought over ground that had already been familiar to the Grenadier Guards, for William III had established his headquarters here eight years earlier during his campaign against France

By courtesy of the Parker Gallery

The Battle of Oudenarde, June 1708. The French army is lined up in the background beside the windmill at the right with the Allies facing them, among the smoke of gunfire. On the left can be seen the bridges over the River Scheldt which the weary Allied troops crossed to victory

By courtesy of the Parker Gallery

The Battle of Malplaquet, September 1709. Here the English, Dutch and Austrians under Marlborough and Prince Eugene defeated the French, a victory which was won at heavy cost to the Allies: "a very murdering battle" as Marlborough described it. Malplaquet lies on the bor-

By courtesy of the Parker Gallery

The Battle of Waterloo opened with an attack by Napoleon, on the morning of June 18, 1815, on the farm of Hougoumont, an advanced post protecting Wellington's right flank and occupied by several companies of British Guards and the Nassau Regiment. Though fierce, the enemy attack ultimately failed. The 1st Regiment of Foot Guards received the name Grenadier after Waterloo to commemorate their defeat of Napoleon's Grenadiers

The Guards advanced against the ridge held by the French, dragging their guns up with them. The French could not see the British until they topped the ridge, and then the two sides suddenly confronted each other at 50 paces. Colonel Lord Charles Hay, captain of the King's Company of the First Guards, took out his flask and drank to them, saluting at the same time with his hat. He told them that he was followed by the English Guards, adding in a bantering tone that he hoped they would stand till his Regiment came up to them, and not swim the Scheldt as they had swum the Main at Dettingen.

Of the subsequent British attack, Marshal Saxe wrote: "These are deeds we all saw, but pride forbids us to speak of them, because we know well that we could not imitate them", surely one of the most remarkable tributes paid by a victorious commander to his defeated enemies.

The crossed swords by which cartographers represent great battles begin to overlap each other upon the maps of Holland and Belgium by the time of the Napoleonic wars. *1794*, attack on Roubaix. *1795*, winter retreat from the Waal to Bremen almost as terrible for the British Guards as the retreat from Moscow was for the French. *1809*, the disastrous expedition to Walcheren. *1814*, the Guards enter Antwerp, having stormed Bergen-op-Zoom across its frozen moat. *1815*, Quatre Bras and Waterloo; and it was here more than at any other single place in the Low Countries that the Grenadiers wrote their name indelibly in blood. Their light companies in the orchards of Hougoumont, the second and third Battalions under Maitland in the centre of the main ridge where Wellington himself watched the final repulse of the French Imperial Guard, won for the Regiment the title by which it will always be known.

As if the 19th century had drained itself of blood and poison during its opening years, the corn was allowed to ripen untrampled in the fields of Flanders for the next hundred years, and the Grenadiers only crossed the narrows of the Channel and North Sea to pay ceremonial visits to their allies. At Waterloo the British Army had numbered 31,500. At the Battle of Mons, it was 36,000. There the similarity ends, for the retreat which followed that battle imposed upon the British the severest test which can be imposed on any army, and which the French in 1815, traversing much the same ground, did not survive. The B.E.F. were short of food and sleep when they began their retreat, and they continued

There was a gap of a hundred years after Waterloo before the Grenadier Guards in World War I returned to Flanders: the Grenadiers outside a captured German machine-gun emplacement, Ypres, 1917

erial War Museum

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In World War II the Grenadiers came once more to the Low Countries. With the Coldstream they led the Guards Armoured Division into Brussels in September 1944 during the sweep to the Rhine

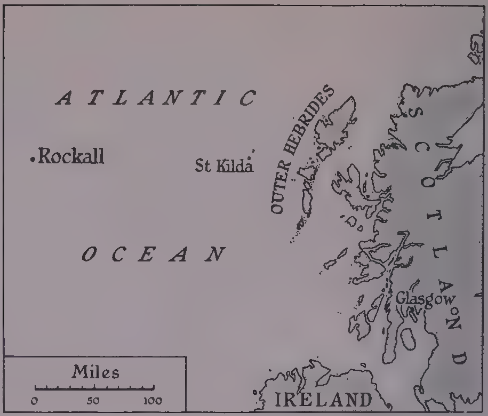
it for thirteen days. At the end they were still an army, and a formidable army, for they rightly judged that although confronted by the most renowned troops in Europe, they had not been beaten. The Retreat from Mons was as creditable to the Grenadiers as any episode in their history.

When they returned to Belgium a quarter of a century later, in May 1940, the three Battalions of the Grenadiers were ranged almost contiguously upon the left bank of the River Dyle, and had scarcely exchanged their first shots with the German advanced guard, before they received the then inexplicable order to retreat. Their way back to Dunkirk lay through Brussels. "A company of the 3rd Battalion", reads the Regimental history, "took a wrong turning in the city, and doubled back on their tracks for a short distance before they rejoined the right road. During that brief space of time new hope gathered in the eyes of the Bruxellois; they began to cheer; the Allies were returning to the front. When they saw the company heading once more westwards, the cheers died away." The Grenadiers did not see Brussels again until they entered it with the Guards Armoured Division on September 3, 1944.

They passed on to liberate Louvain, to capture by a brilliant operation the great road-bridge over the Waal at Nijmegen, and to penetrate the Siegfried line on the Dutch-German border. In the four years' interval between the great retreat and the greater advance, the Grenadiers had changed their role from infantry to armoured troops. Huge armies were on the march, and air-fleets were flying, over ground which had been won and lost by as many battalions in the centuries before. Yet the same basic physical features dominated the battlefields: the rivers, the cities at the centres of communication, the floods, the ice, the seaports and the forests. A strange geographic continuity draws together the Grenadiers of three hundred years. The forces of Nature and the shape of land are still strong enough to govern man's efforts to conquer.

Rockall:
The First and Latest Landings
by JAMES FISHER

A book has at last been written about Britain's remotest island and published, this month, with thirty-four illustrations, by Geoffrey Bles. It is full of adventures: two of them are described in the following much-abbreviated extracts



A. J. Thornton

1811

Basil Hall was born in Edinburgh on December 31, 1788, the second son of Sir James Hall, baronet, of Dunglass in Haddingtonshire. He entered the Navy in May 1802, seeing service on the North American station until, shortly after his promotion to Lieutenant in 1808, he joined *Endymion* under the Hon. T. B. Capel. I make no apologies for quoting extracts from his account of the first landing on Rockall, from his *Fragments of Voyages and Travels* of 1831.

"In a fine autumnal morning, just a week after we had sailed from Lough Swilly, to cruise off the north of Ireland, a sail was reported on the leebeam. We bore up instantly, but no one could make out what the chase was, nor which way she was standing—at least, no two of the knowing ones could be found to agree upon these matters. The general opinion was, that it must be a brig with very white sails aloft, while those below were quite dark—as if the royals were made of cotton, and the courses of tarpaulin—a strange anomaly in seamanship, it is true, but still the best theory we could form to explain the appearances. A short time served to dispel these fancies; for we discovered, on running close to our mysterious vessel, that we had been actually chasing a rock—not a ship of oak and iron, but a solid block of granite, growing, as it were, out of the sea, at a greater distance from the mainland than, I believe, any other island, or islet, or rock of the same diminutive size, is to be found in the world. This mere speck on the surface of the waters—for it seems to float on the sea—is only seventy feet high, and not more than a hundred yards in circumference. It lies at the distance of fewer than 184 miles very nearly due west of St. Kilda, the remotest of the Hebrides, 290 from the nearest part of the main coast of Scotland, and 260 from the north of Ireland. Its name is Rockall, and it is well known to those Baltic traders which go north about. The stone of which this curious peak is composed is a dark-coloured granite, but the top being covered with a coating as white as snow, from having been for ages the resting-place of myriads of sea-fowl, it is constantly mistaken for a vessel under all sail.

As we had nothing better on our hands, it was resolved to make an exploring expedition to visit this little islet. Two boats were accordingly manned for the purpose. When we left the ship, the sea appeared so unusually smooth, that we anticipated no difficulty in landing; but on reaching the spot, we found a swell rising and falling many feet, which made it an exceedingly troublesome matter to accomplish our purpose. One side of the rock was perpendicular, and as smooth as a wall. The others, though steep and slippery, were sufficiently varied in their surface to admit of our crawling up when once out of the boat. In time, however, we all got up, hammers, sketch-books, and chronometers, inclusive.

As it was considered a point of some moment to determine not only the position, but the size of the rock by actual observations made upon it, all hands were set busily to work—some to chip off specimens—others to measure the girth by means of a cord—while one of the boats was sent to make soundings where the bottom could be reached.

After we had been employed for some time in this manner, we observed a current sweeping past us, at a considerable rate, and rather wondered that the ship, which was fast drifting away from us, did not fill and make a stretch, so as to preserve her distance. But as the day was quite clear, we cared less about this addition to the pull, and went on with our operations. I forget exactly at what hour a slight trace of haze first came across the field of view. This soon thickened into a fog, which felt like a drizzle, and put some awkward apprehensions into our heads. It was immediately decided to get into the boats and return to the *Endymion*; for, by this time, we had finished our work, and were only amusing ourselves by scrambling about the rock.

The swell had silently increased in the interval to such a height, that the operation of returning to the boats was rendered twice as difficult as that of disembarking. It required the greater part of half an hour to tumble our whole party back again.

We pushed off, with our complement entire, towards the ship; but, to our astonishment and dismay, no *Endymion* could now be seen. She had evidently drifted off to a considerable distance; and, as the first thickening of the air had destroyed its transparency, we could see nothing in the slightest degree, even like what is called the loom of a vessel. We rowed to some distance from the rock; but nothing was to be seen all round.

It then occurred to some of our philosophers that as dense air, by its very definition is heavier than light air, it might so happen that the humid vapours had settled down upon the surface of the sea, and that, in fact, we were groping about in a shallow stratum of untransparent matter. The top of the rock, which was seventy feet higher, it was thought, might be in the clear region, and the ship's mastheads, if not her hull, be visible from thence. So one of the men was landed, the most alert of our number, who skipped up the rock like a goat.

All eyes were now turned to our look-out man, who no sooner reached the summit, than he was asked what he saw, with an impatience that betrayed more anxiety on the part of the officers than they probably wished should be perceived by the boats' crews.

'I can see nothing all round,' cried the man, 'except something out thereabouts'—pointing with his hand.

'What does it look like?'

'I am afraid, sir, it is a fog bank coming down upon us.' And so it proved.

Although our predicament may now be supposed as hopeless as need be, it was curious to observe the ebbs and flows in human thought as circumstances changed. Half an hour before, we had been provoked at our folly in not having left the rock sooner: but it was now a matter of rejoicing that we possessed such a fixed point to stick by, in place of throwing ourselves adrift altogether. We reckoned with certainty upon the frigate managing, sooner or later, to regain the rock; and as that was the only mark at which she could aim, it was best for us to keep near.

Since there was evidently nothing for it but to remain fast, we chatted away as merrily as we could—each one trying to conceal his anxiety from his neighbour—some with considerable success—others without any.

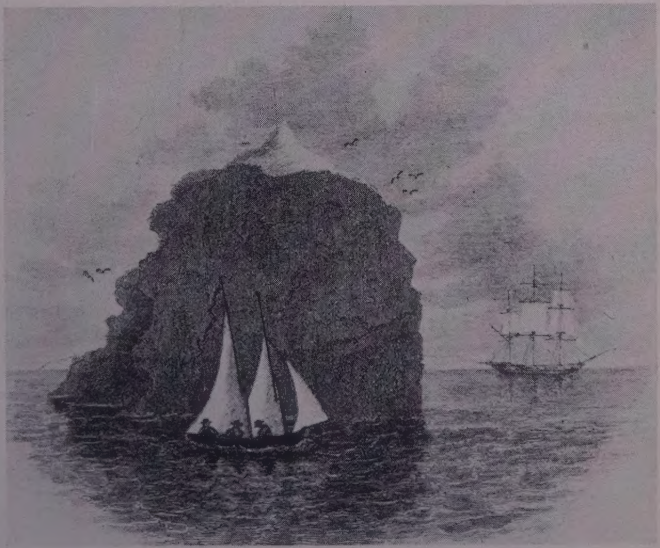
. . . While we were speculating upon one another's characters in the boats below, our faithful watchman perched on the peak of the rock, suddenly called out, 'I see the ship!' This announcement was answered by a simultaneous shout from the two boats' crews, which sent the flocks of gannets and sea-mews screaming to the right and left, far into the bosom of the fog.

An opening or lane in the mist had occurred, along which we could now see the frigate, far off, but crowding all sail, and evidently beating to windward. We lost as little time as possible in picking up our shivering scout off the rock, an operation which cost nearly a quarter of an hour. This accomplished, away we rowed, at the utmost stretch of our oars, towards the ship.

We had hardly proceeded a quarter of a mile before the fog began to close behind our track, so as to shut out Rockall from our view. This we cared little about, as we not

Basil Hall's party landing on Rockall, September 8, 1811

By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum



only still saw the ship, but trusted, from her movements, that she likewise saw the boats. Just at the moment, however, that we came to this satisfactory conclusion, she tacked, thereby proving that she had seen neither boats or rock, but was merely groping about in search of her lost sheep. Had she continued on the course she was steering when we first saw her, she might have picked us up long before the fog came on again; but when she went about, this hope was destroyed. In a few minutes more we, of course, lost sight of the frigate in the fog; and there we were, in a pretty mess, with no ship to receive us, and no island to hang on by!

It now became necessary to take an immediate part; and we decided at once to turn back in search of the rock. We made a good landfall, and there was a wonderful degree of happiness attendant even upon this piece of success. Having again got hold of Rockall, we determined to abide by our firm friend till circumstances should render our return to the ship certain. It now became indispensable to adopt some definite line of operation, for the angry-looking night was setting in fast. Fortunately, we were saved from further trials of patience or ingenuity by the fog suddenly rising, as it is called—or dissipating itself in the air, so completely that, to our great joy, we gained sight of the ship once more.

It appeared afterwards that they had not seen our little island from the *Endymion* nearly so soon as we discovered her; and she was, in consequence, standing almost directly away from us, evidently not knowing exactly whereabouts Rockall lay. This, I think, was the most anxious moment during the whole adventure; nor shall I soon forget the sensation caused by seeing the jib-sheet let fly, accompanied by other indications that the frigate was coming about."

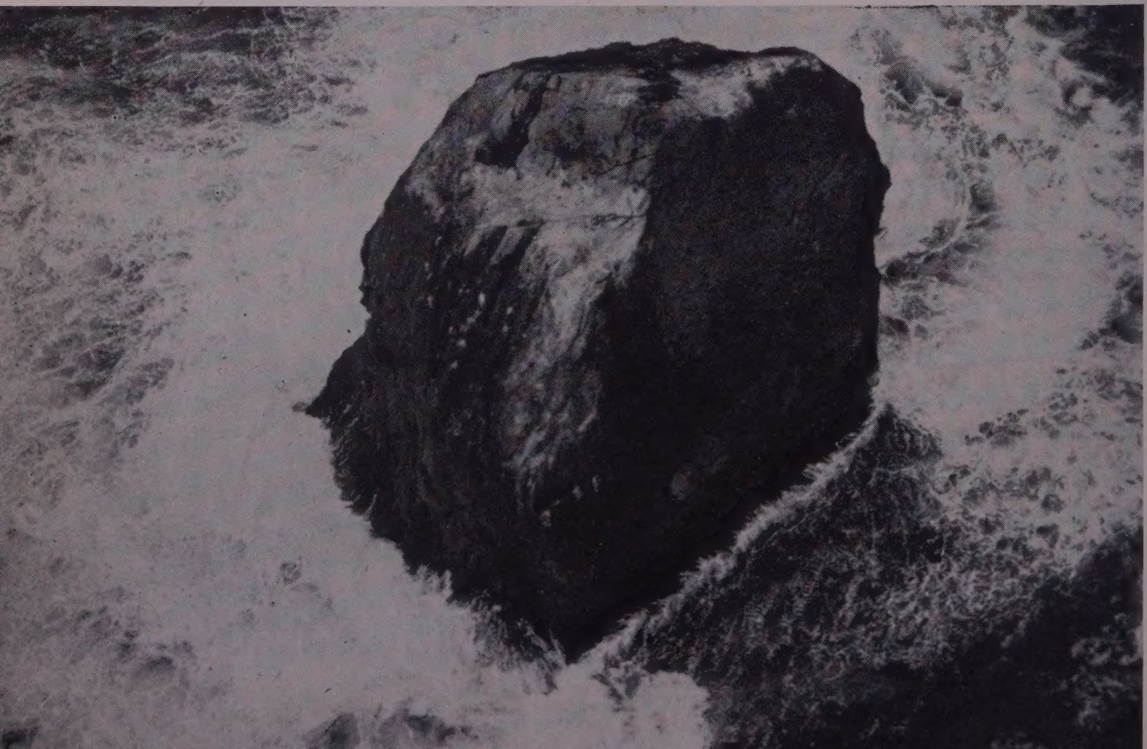
1955

It was easy to understand why the decision to take Rockall had been made at Cabinet level, and why Commander (now Captain) R. H. Connell, D.S.C., R.N., carried with him on *Vidal* the Queen's Commission to annex the islet. With traditional words, Elizabeth II, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and of her other realms and territories, Queen, addressed her "trusted and well-beloved Richard Connell", bore him greetings and commanded him that:

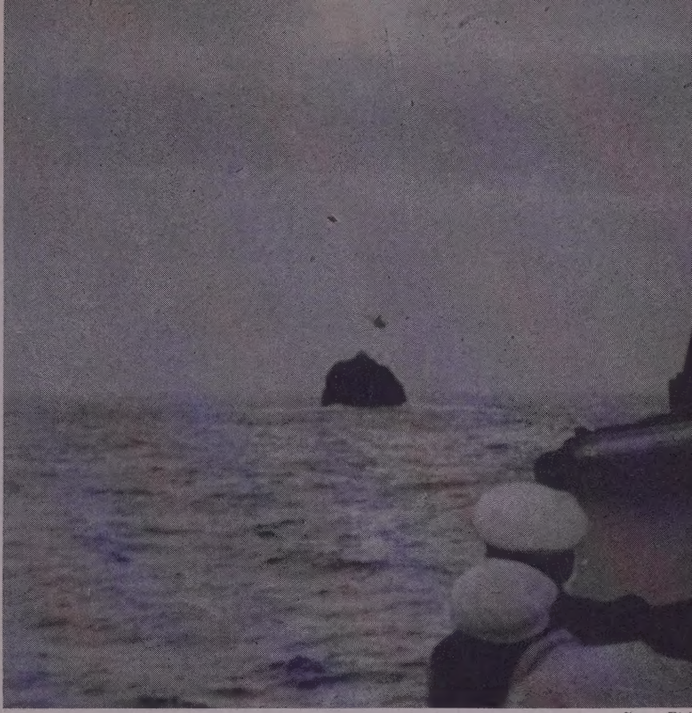
> When our ship *Vidal* is in all respects ready for sea and all necessary personnel has embarked, you are to leave Londonderry on September 14, 1955, or the earliest date thereafter. Then you will proceed to the island of Rockall.

An R.A.F. photograph of Rockall from the south-west. Hall's Ledge is to the left of the summit

Imperial War Museum



> On arrival at Rockall you will effect a landing and hoist the Union Flag on whatever spot appears most suitable or practicable, and you will then take possession of the island on our behalf. You will keep a record of your proceedings. When the landing has been effected and the flag hoisted you will cement a commemorative plaque to the rock.



James Fish

Vidal's *helicopter over Rockall, September 18, 1955*

The 2000-ton ship of which Commander Connell was Captain was the finest, latest survey-vessel in the world. Amongst the other distinctions of H.M.S. *Vidal* is the fact that she is the first unit of the Royal Navy designed with special helicopter flight-deck and hangar. She is, indeed, the only helicopter-carrying survey-vessel in existence.

I joined *Vidal*, as she lay at anchor in Lough Foyle, off Londonderry, on September 15, 1955. Not long after I came aboard a Dragonfly helicopter, piloted by Lieutenant Ronald Leonard, dropped onto *Vidal's* flight-deck, and soon afterwards we were under weigh. Among the new-comers aboard were two cliff-climbing instructors of the Royal Marine Commandos, Sergeant Brian W. Peel of Walthamstow and Corporal Alexander A. Fraser of Granton, Edinburgh. Peel, Fraser and I were to form the landing-party, under *Vidal's* First Lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander Desmond E. P. D. Scott, of Whitstable. The two young Commandos had had some very special training.

Armed with a collection of Rockall photographs, No. 42 Commando of the Royal Marines, stationed at Bickleigh, near Plymouth, had looked around for a rock on Devon's coast resembling Rockall as closely as possible, with a ledge on it of about the same size as Hall's Ledge. This we had calculated from the photographs to be about twenty feet long, and in its main part, between six feet and ten feet wide (and we found this to be so, moreover, when we finally reached it!). Neither Sergeant Peel nor Corporal Fraser were told what the task was. They simply knew that they had to land on a rock somewhere; and they were given a dummy brass plate, and a flagstaff and Union Flag; and were winched, with this gear, on and off their Devonshire cliff from a helicopter, until they could cement the brass plate in position in twenty minutes, and erect the flagstaff in another twenty. The forethought behind this exercise produced such speed and precision that Peel and Fraser actually saved some time on their schedule when they came to do the job on Rockall.

At about half-past four on the morning of Saturday, September 17, Rockall was spotted on *Vidal's* radar screen, and the ship stood off till daylight in a strong westerly wind. Two depressions were following each other east across the North Atlantic, and conditions looked bad. Rockall, when dawn broke, was a tiny red and grey pyramid beset by swirling swells, spray sailing high over its top. Any attempt that day was out of the question.

Commander Connell knew that much now depended on the length of the predicted lull between the two moving depressions. Would it last into the morning? Surely enough, during the night the wind fell right away, and the swell became more oily, diminished a little. When we picked Rockall up again in daylight on September 18 the spray was visibly bathing only its lower third. The Meteorological Officer forecast two or three hours of calm or light winds after dawn, followed by strong winds, or a gale, later in the day. There was a good and proper chance, and Commander Connell decided to take it.

At 7.15 a.m., therefore, *Vidal* closed the rock, and the helicopter was wheeled out of its hangar onto the little flight-deck and spread its rotors. The pilot warmed up the engine; Aircrewman First-Class R. V. Goodchild took his place at the winch, Sergeant Peel stepped into the cabin, and the first airlift took off at 8.37 a.m. The helicopter half circled *Vidal*, crossed her stern, and headed for Rockall, now 500 yards away on our beam.

Meanwhile a ship's boat was made ready in davits and a crew, fully dressed for rescue, stood by in case of trouble: they stayed in readiness throughout the whole operation, during which *Vidal* remained hove-to, or slowly steaming, between 400 and 800 yards from Rockall.

With its sheer eastern face and its convex slope on north, west and south, Rockall is roughly a half cone. Its top is sharpened to a little apex and ridge and about twelve feet below this apex Hall's Ledge runs flat along the south side of Rockall's top and curves some way round the west side.

From many aerial photographs we had diagnosed that this ledge was the only place on which a landing could be made with reasonable safety from a helicopter's winch and strop provided that eddy conditions allowed a steady hover. The pilot took his first run in with an explorer's circumspection. A twelve-knot breeze was helpful to hovering; but he was anxious about eddies, about wind reflected from the rock. He circled Rockall twice and found no eddy-trouble, and at the end of his second circuit we saw Sergeant Peel was dangling from the winch at ten feet. Twenty feet now. The ledge; no, overshot, swinging; no, he's not; yes, he is. He was on Hall's Ledge all right, picking himself up, out of the strop in a flash, standing, thumb-upping the pilot.

The empty strop swung below the helicopter as Goodchild wound it in. Peel scrambled off the ledge onto the summit ridge and stood, perched on the top pinnacle, adding nearly 10 per cent to Rockall's height. From *Vidal*, somewhat relieved, the ship's company watched him stand where, I believe, one party alone has stood before, 144 years ago.

The Dragonfly's winch had already fished the next load off the flight-deck, a bundle of emergency rescue gear and provisions, and a brass plaque. In a minute or two Peel had unhooked it on Hall's Ledge, dragged it on one side and begun to unpack. When Fraser (carrying the Union Flag) safely joined him on the next lift, they at once began to choose a site for the plaque and flagstaff on Hall's Ledge. Scott and I followed.

The plaque was now bedded, and it read:

> By authority of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of her other realms and territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, etc., etc., etc., and in accordance with Her Majesty's instructions dated the fourteenth day of September, One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Fifty Five, a landing was effected this day upon this Island of Rockall from H.M.S. *Vidal*. The Union Flag was hoisted and possession of the Island was taken in the name of Her Majesty.
>
> (Signed) R. H. Connell,
> Captain, H.M.S. *Vidal*,
> 18th September, 1955.

Lieutenant-Commander Scott then radioed *Vidal* that all was ready, and at 10.16 we stood to attention and saluted as he raised the Union Flag, and said: "In the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, I hereby take possession of this Island of Rockall."

Vidal then closed Rockall, and steamed slowly past with her crew at attention on the upper deck, and fired a salute of twenty-one guns. Scott and I radioed short progress reports back to *Vidal*. The commandos climbed like cats over the slippery, wet, alga-covered granite, collecting more rock, algae and lichens, gouging periwinkles out of the cracks with tweezers. Peel roped down to the seaweed line, fixed two ring-bolts and ropes to help a future sea-landing above the seaweed-zone, snatched a piece of the oar-weed, got soaked and scrambled up grinning. Fraser worked along the sharp edge of the perpendicular east face; and we all looked hard for traces of barnacles or limpets: we found none in the time we had, and we can be pretty certain that none live on the rock. Time, indeed, was getting short; by 11 o'clock the predicted collapse of the weather had begun.

All that we had landed to do was done. We radioed our intention to return. Refuelled, the helicopter took off again. Only seven winchings this time: gear and specimens; Fisher; Fraser; Peel; main gear; emergency gear; Scott.

The helicopter landed at 11.40 with Scott and with considerable difficulty, for *Vidal* was lifting and sinking ten feet and more, in the rising swell. A scrum of sailors hurled themselves on its struts and pinned it to the deck. Scott, Goodchild and Leonard climbed out. With the easing of tension, the sailors yawned and stretched round the flight-deck. It began to rain, and Rockall appeared in a mist of windy drizzle, the Union Flag looking very lonely fluttering on its new island.